

"That generations of historians have resorted to what might be called "proof by haphazard quotation" does not make the procedure valid or reliable; it only makes it traditional." Lee Benson

Anthroposophy and Ecofascism: A paragraph by paragraph Commentary By Daniel Hindes On Peter Staudenmaier's Anthroposophy and Ecofascism

Note: I have converted Peter Staudenmaier's original footnotes to endnotes.

Paragraph 1:

In June 1910 Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, began a speaking tour of Norway with a lecture to a large and attentive audience in Oslo. The lecture was titled "The Mission of Individual European National Souls in Relation to Nordic-Germanic Mythology." In the Oslo lecture and throughout his Norwegian tour Steiner presented his theory of "national souls" (Volksseelen in German, Steiner's native tongue) and paid particular attention to the mysterious wonders of the "Nordic spirit." The "national souls" of Northern and Central Europe were, Steiner explained, components of the "germanic-nordic sub-race," the world's most spiritually advanced ethnic group, which was in turn the vanguard of the highest of five historical "root races." This superior fifth root race, Steiner told his Oslo audience, was naturally the "Aryan race."^{PS1}

This introductory paragraph gets right down to business, introducing the thesis and supporting it with vivid examples. It is also inaccurate in almost every detail, which is characteristic of the entire piece. For one, Rudolf Steiner's speaking "tour" of Norway consisted entirely of lectures in Oslo over a two-week period.¹ During this "tour" he spoke primarily on the subject of "Folk Souls" in a series of eleven lectures from June 7th to June 17th, 1910 under the title "The Mission of Individual Folk Souls In Connection With Germanic-Nordic Mythology".² A transcript of the eleven lectures was published in book form in two different versions and many editions. The version edited by Steiner for publication has been translated into several languages including English twice.

¹ In addition Steiner gave two lectures in Oslo on June 13th, one about Christ, and one on philosophy, focusing on Hegel. This information can be found in Christoph Lindenberg's excellent Rudolf Steiner: Eine Chronik. (Stuttgart: 1988. Page 295.) This book is an exhaustive and accurate day-by-day and month-by-month chronology of Steiner's working life. You can look up what he was lecturing on and writing at any given point in time. At a glance we can see that immediately before Oslo Steiner was in Copenhagen (from June 2nd to 5th) lecturing on "Wege und Ziele des geistigen Menschen" (paths and goals of the spiritual human being) published in volume 125 of the complete works, and on the 22nd of June he was in Berlin, probably writing the first draft of his drama "The Portal of Initiation" (published in volume 44). Unfortunately this book is available only in German.

² In the German, "Die Mission Einzelner Volksseelen Im Zusammenhange Mit Der Germanisch-Nordischen Mythologie" Note the subtle but important change from "Individual Folk Souls" to "Individual European National Souls" in this erroneous translation. The word "European" appears nowhere in the German, and changing "Folk" to "National", while questionable from a translators perspective, was important for Staudenmaier's need to create evidence of Steiner's nationalism, because there is none otherwise present.

During this period many of Rudolf Steiner's lectures were attended by as little as 10 to as many as 100 people. By all accounts Steiner's listeners were generally attentive.³ I am not sure where Peter Staudenmaier got his information on the audience size; it is not in any of his cited sources, so perhaps he made it up, an "opening device" or "hook" for the Norwegian readers of the article.⁴

The lecture referenced in Staudenmaier's text above cannot be identified with any of the known Steiner lecture texts from this period in Norway, a fact that Peter Staudenmaier has not been able to explain.⁵ While the summary of the nonexistent lecture given above bears some superficial resemblance to a few themes in the book it flatly contradicts Steiner's actual thesis. For one, no portion refers to the superiority of the fifth root race (nor has Staudenmaier been able to produce one during a back and forth discussion of several months on a public e-mail list). We find at the start of lecture five (June 11th, 1910):

"It will be seen from the last lecture that if we wish to make an impartial study of the facts underlying our present investigation we must transcend those prejudices which might easily arise on matters which I must now describe objectively. So long as one has the slightest tendency to take personally an objective description of a particular race or people, it will be difficult to reach a unprejudiced understanding of the facts presented in this lecture-course. For this reason these matters can only be discussed in the light of a systematic knowledge of the spirit. For however deeply one may be involved emotionally in a particular people or race, as Anthroposophists we have an adequate counterpoise in the teaching of karma and reincarnation, when rightly understood. This teaching opens a vista into the future and reveals that our integral Self is incarnated in successive ages in different races and peoples. When we contemplate the destiny of our integral Self we may be sure that we shall share not only the positive or perhaps also the negative aspects of all races and peoples; but we may be sure that in our inmost being we shall also receive the countless blessings of all races and all peoples since we are incarnated in different races at different times.

"Our consciousness, our horizon, is enlarged through these ideas of karma and reincarnation. Only through these teachings therefore do we learn to accept what

³ Various sources put the audience size at about 70. Whether this constitutes a "large" audience depends on your definition and perspective.

⁴ Peter Staudenmaier, in an e-mail posting to the Waldorf Critics list: "Writers call this an 'opening device'," and "I used it [the non-existent lecture] merely for the Norway hook and to introduce Steiner's terminology." <http://www.topica.com/lists/waldorf-critics/read/message.html?mid=1708444269&sort=d&start=10275>

⁵ When challenged on this by Sune Nordwall, he first claimed that his source was the rare 1911 German version. This edition has never been translated into English. (See: <http://www.topica.com/lists/waldorf-critics/read/message.html?mid=1706550106>). Without any actual evidence, he continued to claim that the 1911 version would support his writing. However, a comparison of the 1911 edition with the 1922 edition shows only minor corrections to words and phrases within sentences, and not a wholesale rearrangement of content. Later Staudenmaier admitted, "Everything I wrote in my paragraph was based on secondary sources" but continues to argue that his secondary sources are more accurate than the primary source. Further, a check of that secondary source - Hans Mändl's *Vom Geist des Nordens*, page 6 - clearly states that the title refers to the entire series of lectures and not to an individual lecture as Staudenmaier claims. (see <http://hem.passagen.se/thebee/comments/PS/Untruths-of-Staudenmaier-2.htm>). It is typical of the quality of his scholarship that Staudenmaier cannot acknowledge an error that obvious, and his attempts to weasel out are quite telling of his relationship to truth. He appears to feel comfortable making things up if he feels that it is unlikely anyone will catch him on it.

is revealed to us at the present time concerning the mysterious relations of race and nation. If we rightly understand the theme of these lectures we shall harbor no regrets at having incarnated in a particular people or race. But an objective survey of national and racial characteristics may, nonetheless, provoke dissension and disharmony unless it is accepted in the spirit I have already suggested. The aspirant for spiritual knowledge will learn through the teachings of karma and reincarnation how every nation, even the smallest nation, has to contribute its share towards the total evolution of humanity. In the second part of this lecture-course I propose to show - and herein lies its real importance - how the particular influences of the missions of the several peoples are merged in the whole of humanity and how even isolated ethnic groups which are scattered here and there amongst larger national groups have their part to play in the great harmony of human evolution."⁶

So rather than a paean to the superiority of an Aryan race we find Steiner praising the virtues of all races and telling his listeners that they will reincarnate into every race. The only thing Steiner might appear guilty of is making generalizations about the different races. Throughout the book he is careful to reiterate that there is no basis for claiming the superiority of one race over another. And even Steiner's generalizations seem value-free. For example, we hear: "If we state that the negro race was born of the cooperation between the normal Spirits of Form and the abnormal Spirits of Form centered in Mercury, then from an occult standpoint we are perfectly correct in describing the Negro race as the Mercury race"⁷ (Europeans are described as the "Jupiter Race" - the *Europeans*, not the Aryans, not the Germans and not the Scandinavians). An unsympathetic critic with no understanding of Steiner's spiritual science might call the whole idea silly, but it hardly constitutes a doctrine of Aryan superiority. And it is flatly counter to the claim that Steiner's teaching promotes genocide when Steiner specifically points out that all ethnic groups, no matter how small, have an important role to play in the evolution of humanity. This will not be the last time that Staudenmaier finds himself being flatly contradicted by his source material.

Note that Staudenmaier's footnote, which one would expect to indicate the source of his claims - perhaps a page number or the date of the lecture from which his summary is derived - instead informs us that a later student of Steiner continued to be fascinated by the concepts of the book, offering as proof the title of a book published in 1966. The book is titled "Concerning the Spirit of the North". I should point out that passing judgment on a book on the basis of its title is hardly the mark of serious scholarship.

⁶ Rudolf Steiner. The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls in relation to Teutonic Mythology. London 1970, pages 82-83.

⁷ Rudolf Steiner. The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls in relation to Teutonic Mythology. London 1970, page 101. Lecture of June 12th, 1910.

The German original is Rudolf Steiner. Die Mission einzelner Volksseelen im Zusammenhange mit der germanisch-nordischen Mythologie. Dornach 1962, page 104.

"Wenn wir den Punkt, den wir vor einigen Tagen in unseren Darstellungen in Afrika gefunden haben, uns jetzt näher dadurch charakterisieren, daß, weil die normalen Geister der Form zusammenwirken mit denjenigen abnormen Geistern der Form, die im Merkur zentriert sind, die Rasse der Neger entsteht, so bezeichnen wir okkult ganz richtig das, was in der schwarzen Rasse herauskommt, als die Merkur-Rasse."

Lest the reader think that the reference to the working of the abnormal Spirits of Form is unique to the negro race and therefore constitutes a denigration of that race, I should point out that in the previous pages Steiner had just finished describing how all races are caused by the combined work of normal and abnormal spirits of form. The reader can verify this statement by reading the whole lecture, which I have posted online.

Paragraph 2:

If this peculiar cosmology sounds eerily similar to the teutonic myths of Himmler and Hitler, the resemblance is no accident. Anthroposophy and National Socialism both have deep roots in the confluence of nationalism, right-wing populism, proto-environmentalist romanticism and esoteric spiritualism that characterized much of German and Austrian culture at the end of the nineteenth century. But the connection between Steiner's racially stratified pseudo-religion and the rise of the Nazis goes beyond mere philosophical parallels. Anthroposophy had a powerful practical influence on the so-called "green wing" of German fascism. Moreover, the actual politics of Steiner and his followers have consistently displayed a profoundly reactionary streak.

If this peculiar cosmology sounds eerily similar to the Teutonic myths of Himmler and Hitler, it is because it has been misrepresented here so as to appear so. The thesis of this article is that anthroposophy contributed to National Socialism (among other reasons because both developed in the same location and historical period and must therefore be related). So in a presentation to readers unfamiliar with anthroposophy the similarities must be carefully brought out by any means necessary.

The statement "anthroposophy had a powerful practical influence on the so-called "green wing" of German fascism" is not proven in this article. What exactly Staudenmaier means by "a powerful practical influence" is not clear. "Practical meaning "here's how to be a good fascist?" Or practical meaning "here is how to be a good environmentalist?" The statement seems to confuse the two. This confusion is at the root of the mistake that Staudenmaier and other authors frequently make. One aspect of anthroposophy has been at the vanguard of environmentalism (something many people would acknowledge as good and something anthroposophists, as a rule, are quite proud of). Aspects of this proto-environmentalism then influenced those among the German fascists who were also interested in environmentalism. The next, mistaken leap in this logic is: Since it influenced some fascists, it must therefore be inherently fascist. Convinced they have found a smoking gun, these authors overlook the significant fact that, except for a few individuals involved in "the so-called 'green wing' of German fascism," the remainder of the Nazi state was adamant that anthroposophy was irreconcilable with their fascist values.⁸

⁸ Jakob Wilhelm Hauer to the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst RFSS), Oberabschnitt Süd-West, Stuttgart, on February 7th, 1935. (Archival source: BAD R 4901-3285. Hauer. Translation by Daniel Hindes.):

"Anthroposophical "spiritual science", because it holds fast to outmoded spiritual concepts, causes anthroposophy to belong to the epoch of occidental thinking against which our new race- and volk- based thinking (that sees man as a unified physical-spiritual entity) is fighting for its continued existence. Anthroposophy, too, frees the spirit from its connection to race and volk and damns all that is racial and folk-based (Völkische) to lower spheres of primitivism – to the instinctual – considering it to be a drive to be overcome by the spirit, a prehistoricism. Thereby it demonstrates its interconnection with the dominant streams of previous European spiritual history, above all the Enlightenment, German Idealist philosophy, and the Liberalism of the previous century. In it remains living the idealism of the French Revolution and the humanitarian ideals of the Freemasons, as it does in Theosophy, the mother-organization from which it arose. Like Freemasonry and Theosophy, it mixes itself with oriental mysticism, occultism and spiritualism, and breaks like a large wave – similar in form to the secret teachings of the Kabbalah – over Europe...

"These foundations of the world view have the effect that anthroposophy stands open in a disastrous manner to all anti-völkisch, anti-Nationalistic, pacifistic, überstaatlichen (considering something to be more important than the state) and especially Jewish influences..."

Report of the Security Service Central Office (SD-Hauptamt) in Berlin on "Anthroposophie" dated May 1936. (Archival source: BAD Z/B I 904. Translation by the author.)

"I consider the Anthroposophical worldview, which is in every way internationally and pacifistically oriented, to be quite simply incompatible with National Socialism. The National Socialist worldview is built upon the conception of blood, race, and Volk, and then also, on the conception

Further, the statement "the actual politics of Steiner and his followers have consistently displayed a profoundly reactionary streak" is simply untrue. For clarity we should first separate the politics of Steiner and those of his followers. Steiner's politics will be discussed at length below. Of his followers I will admit that a number, both in the 1930's and later, can be described as "profoundly reactionary." Indeed, every single one of these cases is very well known to Staudenmaier and those upon whose opinions he relies. However, I maintain that even in the 1930's the number of anthroposophists sympathetic to fascism was the smallest minority, and today is minuscule. The vast majority of Steiner's followers all over the world today are politically left of center.⁹ Hitler himself attacked Steiner in print in 1921, and the Nazi regime banned anthroposophy in 1935.

Paragraph 3:

Why does anthroposophy—a blatantly racist doctrine which anticipated important elements of the Nazi worldview by several decades—continue to enjoy a reputation as progressive, tolerant, enlightened and ecological? The details of Steiner's teachings are not well known outside of the anthroposophist movement, and within that movement the lengthy history of ideological implication in fascism is mostly repressed or denied outright. In addition, many individual anthroposophists have earned respect for their work in alternative education, in organic farming, and within the environmental movement. Nevertheless, it is an unfortunate fact that the record of anthroposophist collaboration with a specifically "environmentalist" strain of fascism continues into the twenty-first century.

Calling anthroposophy racist is still a few steps from proving it. We have already heard Steiner's praise of the importance of all races in human development, so at best our author could hope to prove that anthroposophy is a subtly racist doctrine.¹⁰ But a carefully examination of anthroposophy is apparently not Staudenmaier's intent.

of the absolute state. Precisely these two fundamental pillars of the National Socialist worldview and the Third Reich are denied by the anthroposophical worldview. [...] Every study and activity involving anthroposophy necessarily has its source in the anthroposophical worldview. This means that schools built upon the anthroposophical worldview and managed by anthroposophists are a danger to true German education [...]"

Staudenmaier at one point acknowledges this official policy of the Nazi state but dismisses it as petty bureaucratic squabbling. Real fascism, he informs us, was pro-anthroposophy. Aside from demonstrating rather questionable judgment such a stance from a self-proclaimed expert on fascism shows not a little bit of arrogance mixed with a studied ignorance of the broader context.

⁹ While making this assertion I will acknowledge that no scientific research exists on the subject. No surveys have been conducted. I draw on years worth of anecdotal evidence from my many interactions with anthroposophists, as well as discussions in several countries with numerous people on the topic.

¹⁰ Our author could, and later will, argue that Anthroposophy is hopelessly inconsistent internally; that Steiner would praise equality and then turn around and denigrate other nationalities. To prove that claim they would first have to cite instances of Steiner's alleged racist or fascist statements (this he has not done here – it is repeatedly and loudly claimed that Steiner was a racist, but no evidence of this is provided) and show that these are not in any way taken out of context. Further, to claim expert knowledge of Anthroposophy's internal inconsistencies Staudenmaier would need to read more than secondary books on the subject. Most experts on Anthroposophy have spent decades systematically studying the hundreds of volumes of primary source material on the subject. The general consensus of these experts is that Rudolf Steiner was remarkably consistent throughout his lifetime. It seems strange to me that contrary to all this existing research Peter Staudenmaier (and Peter Zegers after him) flatly dismiss the experts as brainwashed and claim that their meager reading of a few secondary sources affords them superior knowledge of such a highly complex subject. Zegers has already been spanked by no less than Noam Chomsky for making claims requiring advanced expertise in a complex subject without appearing to possess such expertise, in that case accusing an Israeli author of anti-Semitism (incidentally, something he will later also accuse Steiner of):

The question of the first sentence begs another one. If anthroposophy is so rotten to the core, how could it possibly have sustained a reputation to the opposite for so long? Staudenmaier attempts to answer this by proposing that the duplicitous anthroposophists systematically deny believing what he, with his self-professed expertise, has discovered they actually believe. This puts him in an interesting position. Either he claims that all anthroposophists who disagree with his opinion are intentionally deceptive, or he claims to know better than the person himself or herself what that person believes.

Next, he goes on to claim that while individuals might have done good things, other members of that group have done and continue to do bad things. What these bad things are is not actually mentioned. There are no actual examples. The implication is, "Disregard the individual. If you see the label 'Anthroposophist' or 'Anthroposophy' you know you are dealing with bad people". This kind of thinking is actually much closer to prejudice and racism than anything found in Steiner. Indeed it is the root of most all bigotry.

As I have stated before: If a few people can be shown to harbor fascist sympathies, it does not follow that everyone with a similar background must therefore also harbor the same fascist sympathies. Anthroposophy is not a monolithic movement where every individual subscribes to a fixed and simple credo. It is a worldwide movement of individuals with a wide variety of thoughts and opinions, united primarily in a common interest in the work of Rudolf Steiner. The role this interest plays in a person's life may vary considerably, as do their other interests.

Paragraph 4:

Organized anthroposophist groups are often best known through their far-flung network of public institutions. The most popular of these is probably the Waldorf school movement, with several hundred branches worldwide, followed by the biodynamic agriculture movement, which is especially active in Germany and the United States. Other well-known anthroposophist projects include Weleda cosmetics and pharmaceuticals and the Demeter brand of health food products. The new age Findhorn community in Scotland also has a strong anthroposophist component. Anthroposophists played an important role in the formation of the German Greens, and Germany's current Interior Minister, Otto Schily, one of the most prominent founders of the Greens, is an anthroposophist.

This paragraph attempts to establish that anthroposophy is a movement that is, by implication, centralized, organized, and everywhere. "Organized groups... [have a] far-flung network of public institutions." Next the Waldorf school movement is mentioned. One would gather from this that a network of Waldorf Schools is an organized public institution of some unmentioned anthroposophist group. Actually, most Waldorf schools are independent and self-governing (many of the European Waldorf schools even have the word "Free" in their name to indicate this). A Waldorf School, like most anthroposophical initiatives, is a grassroots organization,

"I don't know Zegers, but I have to wonder whether he knows anything at all about Shahak and what he does. Of course, Shahak is making "selective use" of the Rabbinic sources he cites (rarely the Talmud, incidentally). That is true of 100% of the finest and most careful scholarship. The question is whether his choices distort the original texts. If Zegers believes he can show that, I am impressed with his scholarship; few people have the deep knowledge of the Rabbinic literature that would be required to have any judgment on the matter. I would certainly await with interest his demonstration of this charge with a careful scholarly analysis of the original sources that Shahak cites; a demonstration that has not yet been attempted, to my knowledge. Lacking that, one can only regard his charges as sheer slander."

Naom Chomsky in the Dutch journal *Kleintje Muurkrant* nr 360, September 2001.

For more detail on the incident, see Sune Nordwall's web page at <http://hem.passagen.se/thebee/comments/articles/Shahak.htm>

usually founded by a group of parents, and in every legal and moral way independent of any outside hierarchical control. In fact, every component of the "far-flung network of public institutions" mentioned above is legally independent of all the others¹¹. Many of these alleged dangerous anthroposophical initiatives do exactly the same thing that Peter Staudenmaier also spends his time at: they are organized grass-roots social initiatives¹². But rather than having Karl Marx as their ideological inspirer, they have Rudolf Steiner, which seems to bother our author considerably.

By naming all these initiatives Staudenmaier inadvertently confers quite a bit of praise on the accomplishments of various anthroposophists, though doubtless it was not his intention. It is also an attempt to link all these initiatives. Are the very real accomplishments of the German Green Party now somehow worthless if one of its founders happens to be an anthroposophist and a few other misguided anthroposophists happen to have been Nazis?

Paragraph 5:

In light of this broad public exposure, it is perhaps surprising that the ideological underpinnings of anthroposophy are not better known. Anthroposophists themselves, however, view their highly esoteric doctrine as an "occult science" suitable only for a spiritually enlightened elite. The very name "anthroposophy" suggests to many outsiders a humanist orientation. But anthroposophy is in fact a deeply anti-humanist worldview, which is why humanists like Ernst Bloch opposed it from the beginning.^{PS2} Its rejection of reason in favor of mystical experience, its subordination of human action to supernatural forces, and its thoroughly hierarchical model of spiritual development all mark anthroposophy as inimical to humanist values.

So let me summarize this absurd and illogical paragraph: Anthroposophists are doing a lot of work that is getting positive publicity in the world, but their evil ideology is somehow overlooked. Further, this evil ideology, this "highly esoteric doctrine" they consider "suitable only for a spiritually enlightened elite" (note the classic leftist tactic of decrying elitism). And even their name is misleading, suggesting humanism when in fact, because one Ernst Bloch "opposed it from the beginning," it must not be. And finally, because Peter Staudenmaier has now labeled it anti-reason, pro mystical experiential, subordinating of human action to supernatural forces, and hierarchical (without having offered any examples or even citations of primary or secondary sources to support these allegations) it must be "inimical to humanist values." Or the even shorter version: Ernst Bloch didn't like it, I called it names, and you must consider it evil. This

¹¹ This is true all over the world, and not just in the US. Just about every Waldorf School is a legally independent nonprofit institution. Exceptions include the few US charter schools based on Waldorf methods.

¹² From The Institute for Social Ecology's website:

"Peter Staudenmaier is a social ecologist and left green activist who has been involved with the Institute for Social Ecology since 1989. Currently a faculty member at ISE, Peter lives in Madison, Wisconsin, where he works at a collectively run bookstore co-op. He is also part of a network of housing cooperatives providing democratically controlled resident-owned affordable housing to 200 low income members. In addition to his work with cooperatives, Peter works with grassroots development organizations in Nicaragua as well as with the German radical green group Ecological Left. He devotes much of his time to independent scholarship and antifascist research, and is committed to bridging activism and theoretical work. He is co-author, with Janet Biehl, of the book *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, and has published many articles on anarchism, ecological politics, and the history of right-wing thought. He is an experienced public speaker who conducts frequent lectures and workshops on a wide variety of topics."

type of writing seems more reminiscent of *Pravda* under Stalin¹³ than serious historical scholarship.

The implication that anthroposophists attempt to hide their "highly esoteric doctrine" because they consider it only "suitable only for a spiritually enlightened elite" seems laughable in light of the fact that nearly every Waldorf School sells Rudolf Steiner's "highly esoteric" books openly in their bookstores. Has Peter Staudenmaier ever actually visited a Waldorf school?

In actual fact Bloch did not oppose anthroposophy "from the beginning." The book cited to this effect (*Heritage of our Time*, in German *Erbschaft der Zeit*) was first published in 1935¹⁴. Anthroposophy was at that point about 35 years old, and Steiner was already 10 years dead. By indulging in such rhetorical flourishes, Staudenmaier undermines his credibility as a historian.¹⁵

Paragraph 6:

Who was Rudolf Steiner?

Like many quasi-religious groups, anthroposophists have a reverential attitude toward their founder. Born in 1861, Steiner grew up in a provincial Austrian town, the son of a mid-level civil servant. His intellectually formative years were spent in Vienna, capital of the aging Habsburg [sic]empire, and in Berlin. By all accounts an intense personality and a prolific writer and lecturer, Steiner dabbled in a number of unusual causes. At the age of 36, he reports, he underwent a profound spiritual transformation, after which he was able to see the spirit world and communicate with celestial beings. These ostensible supernatural powers are the origin of most

¹³ *Pravda* was the state-run party newspaper of the U.S.S.R. Under Stalin it published raving denunciations of those targeted by the state for elimination. Their supposed crimes were described in lurid detail. Mostly these crimes were fabricated to create the illusion of justice, though few people either in or outside the country believed these accusations, either at the time or since.

¹⁴ The essay that mentions anthroposophy was written around 1923 according to the book's editor.

¹⁵ Bloch's ramblings are worth quoting at some length. The following is from Bloch's central book, a three volume philosophical work titled "The Principle Of Hope" (*Die Prinzip der Hoffnung*). It serves to give a little insight into Bloch's thinking. I find it telling that Staudenmaier relies on such insightful writing as this to establish his case:

"And let us not forget what second-rate clairvoyance achieves here. ... At the peak of 'Knowledge of Higher Worlds' the occult journalist Rudolf Steiner established himself, a mediocrity in his own right. A mediocre, indeed unbearable curiosity, yet effective, as if mistletoe were still being broken off here, as if something shoddily druidical were fermenting, soaking, murmuring and chattering in a newspaper. Whether the chatter and the low level are necessary for this kind of 'initiation' or occult activation it is difficult to say. There are a few, a very few, serious writings from the Steiner circle, for example Poppelbaum's biosophical study 'Man and Animal' and several chemical-astrological boldnesses with imitations of alchemy; but everywhere else the mere chorus of a hundred thousand fools predominates. Nevertheless there sometimes also appears a dash of mediumistic disposition, an atavistic capacity for parapsychic phenomena, above all for atavistic clairvoyance. There can be no doubt that such phenomena and such dispositions still exist, nor that they rose extremely high in characters like Blavatsky and the somnambulistic Steiner. Atavistic clairvoyance was linked as it were subterraneously with mythic customs and cults, with world-pictures constructed on a different state of consciousness from that of today. Thus Steiner was after all able to touch an elements and secret teachings which from the outside are almost closed to modern consciousness, however great its philosophical empathy. Sometimes types such as these, shallow mermaids or minotaurs of tripod and journalism at the same time such as Blavatsky or Steiner, had in their consciousness a feedpipe from the unconscious, from the long-past, not-past. Or, like deep-sea fish, deformed and flattened, but still in a twilight form scarcely accessible to mythological research, old under-, inter- and hinterworlds rose putrefied to the surface."

anthroposophist beliefs and rituals. Steiner changed his mind on many topics in the course of his career; his early hostility toward Christianity, for example, gave way to a neo-Christian version of spiritualism codified in anthroposophy. But interest in mysticism, occult legends and the esoteric was a constant throughout his life.

To the statement “Like many quasi-religious groups, anthroposophists have a reverential attitude toward their founder” I would like to point out that while the phrase attempts to impute that anthroposophists are quasi-religious by virtue of the fact that they generally have a reverential attitude toward their founder, it does not follow logically. That any group that has a reverential attitude towards its founder is not also thereby quasi-religious is evident when considering the attitude of many Americans towards the founders of their country. While often in many ways reverential, it does not make those Americans a quasi-religious group. And why does Mr. Staudenmaier employ the phrase “quasi-religious”? Are anthroposophists not religious enough for him? If Staudenmaier feels that anthroposophy is a religion, with Steiner as its prophet (or even God) it would be more honest to come out and say so.

In this single-paragraph overview of Steiner's life before 1900 we are missing two words: “and Weimar.” Steiner's years in Vienna and Berlin are mentioned, but the seven years in Weimar are neglected. Apparently they don't fit the thesis, as Berlin and Vienna can be easily shown to be a hotbed of German nationalism and other discredited theories; however, provincial Weimar is somewhat difficult. Up to age 29 Steiner lived in or near Vienna, and at age 36 moved to Berlin. However, from age 29 to 36 Rudolf Steiner worked in Weimar at the Goethe Archives editing Goethe's scientific papers, as well as finishing his doctorate and publishing a total of 95 titles.¹⁶ Among these was his book on Nietzsche, which Staudenmaier makes a great deal of later in this article. This period is comprises about a quarter of Steiner's autobiography that Staudenmaier will make a big deal of in a follow-up piece.¹⁷ These were arguably very formative intellectual years, and would have taken only two words to include. Staudenmaier has repeatedly claimed that he is a true scholar and expert on anthroposophy (though he has backed off these claims recently). If he had read Steiner's autobiography before putting pen to paper for this “fair and balanced” (Staudenmaier's own words) study, he would also find that his next statement above factually incorrect: Steiner claims “he was able to see the spirit world” from early childhood, and not from age 36 as claimed above (though the phrase “and communicate with celestial beings” is a typical Staudenmaier slant and not Steiner's actual wording). This Steiner mentions very early in his autobiography¹⁸. Steiner consistently maintained that his intellectual development was a gradual evolution.¹⁹ It was at age 40 that

¹⁶ Steiner moved to Weimar in the autumn of 1890 and left for Berlin in early 1897. For a very concise overview of Steiner's activity during this time see Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner: An Illustrated Biography*, London 2000, pages 39 to 71. The summary of Steiner's written work from this period is on page 65. In addition to the many articles and the volumes of Goethe's scientific writings, Steiner wrote his doctoral thesis, published an expanded version as *Truth and Science*, wrote an epistemology, a book on Nietzsche and the book he considered to the end of his life to be his most important work: his *Philosophie der Freiheit*. Whether these books are inconsistent with Steiner's later “occult” work will be considered later in this piece. For a more in depth treatment of the period, see Christoph Lindenberg, *Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie*. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistes Leben, 1997 pages 192-272.

¹⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The Course of My Life*, New York, 1951. Chapters X to XXIII (chapters 10 through 23 of 38 total) deal with this period – pages 119 to 249 out of 358.

¹⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *The Course of My Life*, New York 1951, page 12. Speaking of himself as an 8 year old: “For me the reality of the spiritual world was as certain as that of the physical.”

¹⁹ Steiner's view that his intellectual development represented a gradual evolution is demonstrated in the following:

Rudolf Steiner by his own account decided to go public with his spiritual insights²⁰. It is of little wonder that, if Staudenmaier is unable to be accurate in the minor details of dates and years, he has such trouble with the far more difficult task of understanding Steiner's worldview and presenting it accurately.

Staudenmaier's obvious contempt for his subject is quite evident in his calling Steiner's various activities before age 36 "dabble[ing] in a number of unusual causes." Steiner's seven meticulous volumes of Goethe's scientific writings completed while officially in the employ of the Goethe Archives were universally praised by the scholars of his day.²¹ That Steiner's groundbreaking work on epistemology, both in his book *Truth and Science* (expanded from his PhD thesis) and *A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's Worldview* certainly goes well beyond "dabbling" is evident to anyone who has actually read them. Likewise his book on Nietzsche was praised and criticized for its content, but no one leveled the accusation of dilettantism.²²

It is stated that "Steiner changed his mind on many topics in the course of his career." This accusation is hardly new, and Steiner repeatedly addressed it during his lifetime²³. Further, only

"Anyone who has found my writings and lectures may gather all this from them; and I would not especially mention this matter were it not repeatedly said in error that I have departed from all that I wrote and said formerly and turned to the views represented in the works of Blavatsky and Besant. Whoever carefully studies, for example, my *Theosophy*, will find that everything contained in it is developed in accordance with and as a continuation of the direction of modern thought described above; you will find that the matters dealt with are presented in accordance with certain presuppositions contained in Goethe's conceptions of the world, and that only in certain places is mentioned that ideas which I had arrived at (etheric body, sentient body, etc.) are also to be found in the literature which I which is called Theosophical. I know that these explanations shall not be able to do away with certain attacks that are constantly made against me, for in many cases these attacks are not made in order to arrive at the actual facts of the matter but for in some entirely different reason. But what can be done in the face of ever recurring inaccuracies? Nothing can be done but to reiterate the truth!"

Rudolf Steiner. "Approaches to Anthroposophy." Sussex: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1992. Page 31. Translated by Simon Blaxland-de Lange. Lecture of January 11th, 1916 in Basel (GA 35).

²⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The Course of My Life*, New York 1951, page 297:

"The decision to give public expression to the esoteric from my own inner experience impelled me to write for the Magazine for August 28, 1899, on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Goethe's birth, an article on Goethe's fairy-tale of The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily, under the title *Goethes Geheime Offenbarung* (Goethe's Secret Revelation). This article was, of course, only slightly esoteric. But I could not expect more of my public than I there gave. In my own mind the content of the fairy-tale lived as something wholly esoteric, and it was out of an esoteric mood that the article was written."

Steiner goes on to describe how through a couple named Brockdorff and a circle of their friends he found people interested in Theosophy to whom he could speak of the esoteric knowledge that he had developed.

²¹ On leaving the archives, he was praised with the following words: "His work, which combined critical acumen with actual achievement, has gained the commendation of all those best qualified to judge." Cited in Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner: An Illustrated Biography*, London 2000, pages 70-71.

²² For a discussion of the reception of Steiner's book *Friedrich Nietzsche, Ein Kämpfer Gegen sein Zeit* see Christoph Lindenberg, *Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie*, Stuttgart 1997 page 254. "In the press there appeared positive and negative reviews in large numbers. The book rather quickly required another printing."

²³ Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Occult Science*, Hudson 1972, p. xxxii (Preface to the First edition) (translation by Maud and Henry B. Monges, and revised by Lisa D. Monges) :

one example is given, an apparent reversal on the topic of Christianity. This question has been written on at some length by a number of people, though you wouldn't know it from this piece²⁴, and Steiner himself commented on it in his autobiography²⁵. Asserting that Steiner "changed his

"Many kinds of possible criticism could still be cited. There might be critics who have read the earlier writings of the author, for example, *Views of the World and Life in the Nineteenth Century*, or perhaps the brochure on *Haeckel and his Opponents*. Some such critic might say, 'It is incomprehensible how one and the same man can write these books and then, besides the already published book *Theosophy* also write this present book. How is it possible that someone can defend Haeckel and then turn around and discredit what results from Haeckel's research as healthy 'monism'? It might be comprehensible had the author of this *Occult Science* combated Haeckel with 'fire and sword,' but, that he has defended him, indeed, has even dedicated *Views of the World and Life in the Nineteenth Century* to him, is the most monstrous thing imaginable. Haeckel would have unmistakably declined this dedication had he been conscious of the fact that the dedicator might some day write such stuff as this *Occult Science* with its exposition of a more than crude dualism.'" - The author of this book, however, is of the opinion that while it is possible to understand Haeckel very well, it is nevertheless, not necessary to believe that he is only to be understood by one who considers nonsensical everything that is not derived from Haeckel's own concepts and hypotheses. Furthermore, he is of the opinion that it is possible to come to an understanding of Haeckel only by entering upon what he has achieved for science and not by combating him with 'fire and sword.' Least of all does the author believe that Haeckel's opponents are right, against whom, for example in his brochure *Haeckel and His Opponents* he has defended the great philosopher. Indeed, if the writer of this brochure goes far beyond Haeckel's hypotheses and places the spiritual point of view of the world alongside Haeckel's merely naturalistic one, his opinion need not therefore coincide with the opinion of the latter's opponents. If the facts are looked at correctly, it will be discovered that the author's present day writings are in complete accord with his earlier ones."

If Peter Staudenmaier feels that he can demonstrate Rudolf Steiner's statements to be untrue, I eagerly await such an article. However, to do so Staudenmaier would need to actually read whole books by Rudolf Steiner, and there is little evidence that he has done this.

²⁴ See, among others the chapter "War Rudolf Steiner in den Jahren vor 1900 Atheist (Was Rudolf Steiner an atheist in the years before 1900)" in Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner und Ernst Haeckel*, Stuttgart 1965 and Christoph Lindenberg, *Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie*, Stuttgart 1997, pages 443-454. A nice summary is given by Henry Barnes in his book *A Life for the Spirit*, page 67:

"Rudolf Steiner had been accused earlier of being Anti-Christian. It was subsequently said that his statements around the turn of the century were inconsistent with what he wrote later. He deals with this criticism in one of the shortest chapters of his biography. There he points out that it is the concept relegating Christianity to the "beyond" that he opposed. For him the view of revelation that comes to the human being from without – from a reality that we may believe in but cannot know – was at odds with his awareness of a world of spirit that could be experienced and known directly through an act of free cognition."

²⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *The Course of My Life*, New York 1951, page 274:

"Individual assertions regarding Christianity which I wrote or uttered in lectures at this time appear to be contrary to the expositions I gave later. In this connection the following must be noted. At that time, when I used the word "Christianity," I had in mind the "beyond" teaching which is operative in the Christian creeds. The whole content of religious experience refers to a world of spirit which is not attainable by man in the unfolding of his spiritual powers. What religion has to say, what it has to give as moral precepts, is derived from revelations that come to man from without. Against this my view of spirit opposed itself, desiring to experience the world of spirit just as much as the sense-world in what is perceptible in man and in nature. Against this likewise was my ethical individualism opposed, desiring to have the moral life proceed, not from without by way of precepts obeyed, but out of the unfolding of the human soul and spirit, wherein lives the divine. What then occurred in my soul in viewing Christianity was a severe test for me. The time between my departure from the Weimar task and the production of my book *Das Christentum als mystische Tatsache* is occupied by this test. Such tests are the opposition provided by destiny (Karma) which one's spiritual evolution has to overcome."

mind on many topics" without any supporting evidence is an obvious attempt to portray Steiner as unstable, vacillating, and unreliable. Such a picture is completely at odds with virtually every depiction of the man by his contemporaries and biographers. Staudenmaier is obviously not afraid of going against consensus opinion on Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy, but it would help his case if the actual source material even remotely supported his position.

Paragraph 7:

In 1902 Steiner joined the Theosophical Society and almost immediately became General Secretary of its German section. Theosophy was a curious amalgam of esoteric precepts drawn from various traditions, above all Hinduism and Buddhism, refracted through a European occult lens.^{PS3} Its originator, Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), was the inventor of the "root races" idea; she declared the extinction of indigenous peoples by European colonialism to be a matter of "karmic necessity." Theosophy is built around the purported teachings of a coterie of "spiritual masters," otherworldly beings who secretly direct human events. These teachings were, of course, interpreted and presented by Blavatsky and her successor Annie Besant (1847-1933) to their theosophist followers, thus establishing the authoritarian pattern that was later carried over to anthroposophy.

Blavatsky did indeed originate the term "Root Race". And she did declare that indigenous peoples are dying out. However, Staudenmaier has misunderstood (or never read) the explanation for how this is to be accomplished. Contrary to what Staudenmaier would have you believe, Blavatsky did not declare that those indigenous people who were alive ought to die for karmic reasons. Rather, Blavatsky, accepting the scientific reports that indigenous peoples were dying out as a unique racial group due to sterility, declared that this sterility was due to the fact that souls no longer wished to be born into these races. The dying-out process she predicted would take another thousand years. The karmic necessity that Blavatsky talked about was that souls wishing to be born were choosing other races for karmic reasons, and not that indigenous peoples currently alive ought to die.²⁶ Staudenmaier has treated Blavatsky with the same lack of scholarly care and accuracy that he brings to this study of Steiner.

Staudenmaier's footnote does not actually have directly to do with the statements in this paragraph; it refers to a chapter called "The Occult Origins of National Socialism" in the book *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* by George Mosse. If this is as far as Staudenmaier has read in the issue of Theosophy as presented by Blavatsky (as his footnotes imply) then he is indeed woefully unprepared to discuss the subject knowledgably. An unsubstantiated claim, and one which I would oppose on the strongest terms, is the claim that the authoritarian pattern established by Blavatsky and Besant carried over into anthroposophy. In fact, it was on the point of authoritarianism that the anthroposophists broke with the Theosophical society²⁷. Steiner described his position and the events surrounding this

²⁶ See Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *The Secret Doctrine*. 1888. Theosophical University Press. Volume 2, Part 3, Chapter 7, page 780. 30 Apr. 2004 < <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/sd/sd2-3-09.htm> >.

"The dying out of the Hawaiians, for instance, is one of the most mysterious problems of the day. Ethnology will sooner or later have to recognize with Occultists that the true solution has to be sought for in a comprehension of the workings of Karma. As Lefevre remarks, "the time is drawing near when there will remain nothing but three great human types" (before the Sixth Root-Race dawns), the white (Aryan, Fifth Root-Race), the yellow, and the African negro -- with their crossings (Atlanto-European divisions). Redskins, Eskimos, Papuans, Australians, Polynesians, etc., etc. -- all are dying out. Those who realize that every Root-Race runs through a gamut of seven sub-races with seven branchlets, etc., will understand the "why." The tide-wave of incarnating EGOS has rolled past them to harvest experience in more developed and less senile stocks; and their extinction is hence a Karmic necessity."

²⁷ On which I will go into detail below.

break in detail in several places²⁸. Peter Staudenmaier appears not to have read anything on this matter beyond a small number of his favorite secondary sources, most of which are not noted for going into any depth on this or other matters.

It is further implied that Steiner adopted party-line Theosophical doctrine as the basis for his activity as the General Secretary of the German Section. Steiner himself was quite clear on his relationship to Theosophy as it was understood in the Theosophical Society:

“No one was left in uncertainty of the fact that I would bring forward in the Theosophical Society only the results of my own research through perception. For I stated this on all appropriate occasions. When, in the presence of Annie Besant, the German section of the Theosophical Society was founded in Berlin and I was chosen its General Secretary, I had to leave the foundation sessions because I had to give before a non-theosophical audience one of the lectures in which I dealt with the spiritual evolution of humanity, and to the title of which I expressly united the phrase “Eine Anthroposophie.” Annie Besant also knew that I was then giving out in lectures under this title what I had to say about the spiritual world.

When I went to London to attend a theosophical congress, one of the leading personalities said to me that true theosophy was to be found in my book *Mysticism* ..., I had reason to be satisfied. For I had given only the results of my spiritual vision, and this was accepted in the Theosophical Society.

There was now no longer any reason why I should not bring forward this spiritual knowledge in my own way before the theosophical public, which was at first the only audience that entered without restriction into a knowledge of the spirit. I subscribed to no sectarian dogmatics; I remained a man who uttered what he believed he was able to utter entirely according to what he himself experienced in the spiritual world. Prior to the founding of the section belongs a series of lectures – which I gave before Die Kommenden, entitled *Von Buddha zu Christus*. In these discussions I sought to show what a mighty stride the Mystery of Golgotha signifies in comparison with the Buddha event, and how the evolution of humanity, as it strives toward the Christ event, approaches its culmination. In this circle I spoke also of the nature of the mysteries.

... [The importance of Christ] was by no means taught in the Theosophical Society. In this view I was in direct opposition to the theosophical dogmatics of the time, before I was invited to work in the Theosophical Society. For this invitation followed immediately after the cycle of lectures on Christ here described.

... Thus the thing evolved up to the time of my first attendance at a theosophical congress, in London, in the year 1902. At this congress,... it was already a foregone conclusion that a German section of the Society would be founded with myself – shortly before invited to become a member – as the general secretary.

All that was interesting in what I heard [in discussions with Theosophists] stirred me deeply, but it had no influence upon the content of my own views.²⁹

If Peter Staudenmaier would like to argue to the contrary that anthroposophy has an authoritarian dogmatism inherited from Theosophy, he should support such an argument with citations to both historical accounts and primary sources that demonstrate this. Simply asserting it is insufficient. And if he would like to argue that Steiner followed Theosophical doctrine to the

²⁸ See “Die Trennung von der Theosophischen Gesellschaft” (The separation from the theosophical society) in Lindenberg, Christoph. Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1997, pages 484-504.

²⁹ Steiner, Rudolf. The Course of My Life. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1951. Pages 297-298.

letter (or even in spirit) during his years as a member of the Theosophical society this would have to be demonstrated from a comparative study of the relevant primary literature (by my estimation some 80 to 100 rather dense volumes). I am not aware of anyone who has put in the time for such a study (several years by conservative estimates) who has not found substantial points of difference between anthroposophy and Theosophy in precisely the area where Staudenmaier is claiming their similarity. There is simply no evidence that Staudenmaier has anywhere near the depth of understanding of Theosophical doctrine or of anthroposophy necessary to successfully advance his hypothesis.

Paragraph 8:

Steiner dedicated ten years of his life to the theosophical movement, becoming one of its best-known spokespeople and honing his supernatural skills. He broke from mainstream theosophy in 1913, taking most of the German-speaking sections with him, when Besant and her colleagues declared the young Krishnamurti, a boy they "discovered" in northern India, to be the reincarnation of Christ. Steiner was unwilling to accept a brown-skinned Hindu lad as the next "spiritual master." What had separated Steiner all along from Blavatsky, Besant, and the other India-oriented theosophists was his insistence on the superiority of European esoteric traditions.

This paragraph follows that pattern established by Staudenmaier: it covers a number of events from a period, but not in any depth or with any citations, and of course, it gets the basic facts wrong. First, Steiner was not dedicated to the Theosophical movement in the manner implied, as the passages of his that I quoted above make abundantly clear. He lectured and wrote for ten years as General Secretary of the German branch of the Theosophical Society, but always made it clear that he would only ever represent his own knowledge, and never the party line if that in the slightest way diverged from his own insight. And he was certainly not shy about pointing out exactly where he felt party-line Theosophy went wrong.³⁰

³⁰ Examples of Steiner's many critical statements on Theosophy and the Theosophical Society include:

"The Theosophical Society was first established in 1875 in New York by H.P. Blavatsky and H.S. Olcott, and had a decidedly Western nature. The publication "Isis Unveiled", in which Blavatsky revealed the large number of esoteric truths, has just such a western character. But it has to be stated regarding this publication that it frequently presents the great truths of which it speaks in a distorted or even caricatured manner. It is similar to a visage of harmonious proportions appearing distorted in a convex mirror. The things which are said in "Isis" are true, but to how they are said is a lopsided mirror-image of the truth. A distortion arises because of the inappropriate way in which H.P. Blavatsky's *soul* has received these truths. The educated world should have seen in *this* fact alone the evidence for a higher source of inspiration of these truths. For no one who rendered them in such a distorted manner could have created these truths himself. Under the influence of this stream the Theosophical Society took on its eastern character, and the same influence was the inspiration for Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism" and Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine". But both of these again became distortions of the truth. Sinnett's work distorts the high teachings of the initiators through an extraneous and inadequate philosophical intellectualism and Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine" does the same because of her chaotic soul.

"The result was that the initiators, the eastern ones as well, withdrew their influence in increasing measure from the official Theosophical Society in the latter became an area of all kinds of occult forces which distorted the great cause. ... This was the situation when I was faced with the necessity of joining the Theosophical Society."

Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner. *Correspondence and Documents: 1901-1925*. New York: Rudolf Steiner Press 1988. Pages 17-18.

The above is an excerpt from "the Barr Document" written by Steiner for Eduard Schuré in Barr, Alsace in September 1907. Steiner was the General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society at this time, and would be for another six years. Speaking of the subject in 1916, Steiner said:

"I now wish to say something about the development of our Anthroposophical Society, because errors have been circulated on the subject. For instance, it is said that the Anthroposophical society is only a kind of development out of what is called the "Theosophical Society". Although it

On May 8th, 1911 Besant declared Krishnamurti the reincarnated Christ.³¹ This had been building up for some time. Since Leadbeater had “discovered” Krishnamurti, he had been groomed for an important role. Leadbeater researched the previous lives of an important individuality he called Alcyone, publishing his findings in a series of articles titled “*Rents in the Veil of Time*” in the English periodical *Theosophist* starting in April 1910. These were collected in his book *The Lives of Alcyone*. Going back 23,650 years before Christ, Leadbeater described Alcyone (whom he identified as Krishnamurti) and the people around him over successive incarnations. Important people in the Theosophical movement were involved in these previous lives, usually the more important the person in the present Theosophical Society, the more prominent they were in history. Leadbeater was “Sirius” and Besant was “Hercules.” Even among Theosophists his descriptions were not always taken seriously, as evidence by the limerick “In the Lives, in the Lives, I've had all sorts of husbands and wives.”³² Steiner was

is true that what we aim at within our Anthroposophical Society found its place for a time within the framework of the General Theosophical Society, yet our Anthroposophical Society must on no account be confused with the Theosophical Society. And in order to prevent this, I must bring forward something – apparently personal – about the gradual emergence of the Anthroposophical Society.

“It was about 15 years ago that I was invited by a small circle of people to give some lectures on spiritual science. These lectures were afterwards published in the title *Mysticism The Dawn Of The Modern Age*. Until then I had, I might say, endeavored as a solitary thinker to build up a view of the world which on one hand fully reckons with the great, momentous achievements of physical sciences, and on the other hand aspires to gain insight into spiritual worlds.

“I must emphasize the fact that at the time when I was invited to speak to a small circle in Germany on the subject connected with spiritual science already mentioned, I did not depend in any way upon the works of Blavatsky or Annie Besant, nor did I take them particularly into consideration. The outlook expressed by these books have little in common with my view of the world. I had at that time endeavored, purely out of what I discovered for myself, to present some points of view about the spiritual worlds. The lectures were printed; some of them very soon translated into English, and that by a distinguished member of the Theosophical Society, which at that time was particularly flourishing in England; and from this quarter I was urged to enter the Theosophical Society. At no time had I any idea, if the occasion should have presented itself in the Theosophical Society, to bring forward anything to save what was built up on the foundation of my own, independent method of research.

“And that which now forms the substance of an anthroposophical view of the world, as studied in our circle of members, is not borrowed from the Theosophical Society but was represented by me as something entirely independent which – as a result of that society's invitation – took place within it, until it was found to be heretical and was “shown to the door”; and what had thus always been there was further developed and cultivated in the now wholly independent Anthroposophical Society.

“Thus it is an entirely a erroneous conception to confuse in any way what is living within the Anthroposophical Society with what is represented by Blavatsky and Besant. It is true the Blavatsky has in her books put forward important truths concerning spiritual worlds, but mixed with so much error that only one who has accurately investigated these matters can succeed in separating what is significant from what is erroneous. Hence our Anthroposophical movement must claim to be considered wholly independent. This is not put forward from want of modesty, but merely in order to place a fact in its objectively correct light.”

Rudolf Steiner. Approaches to Anthroposophy. Sussex: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1992. Pages 6-7. Translated by Simon Blaxland-de Lange. Lecture of January 11th, 1916 in Basel, GA 35.

³¹ The following paragraph is based on the chapter “Die Trennung von der Theosophischen Gesellschaft” (The separation from the theosophical society) in Lindenberg, Christoph. Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1997, pages 484-504.

³² A more detailed description is offered by Alice Leighton Cleather, in a letter she wrote in 1913 and reprinted as part of a book in 1923:

“The ill-omened consequences of this influence were soon to appear before the world through the affair of Alcyone and the founding of the Order of the Star in the East . . . If a real Indian initiate, a

notably absent. While some at the time doubtless wondered, Steiner himself knew why. In June 1909 Besant had offered him the position of John the Baptist in the scheme – a role that was to have paralleled the one Besant imagined for him: the herald of the Christ. Steiner had politely declined. His response was to continue to hold lectures throughout Europe on his understanding of the Christ event, which he had long termed “The Mystery of Golgotha.” The descent of God into a human body was a one-time event, central to earth evolution. From the beginning Steiner had been clear that he would only teach what he himself perceived, and would not under any circumstances represent some party doctrine.

The break with the Theosophical Society came in 1913, and not because Steiner disagreed with other Theosophists, which he had done for years, and not directly because of the Krishnamurti. The break was a result of actions by the Theosophical leadership to sideline Steiner over differences of opinion on the nature of the Christ. The details can be tedious, but the ultimatum was delivered in India by Besant when, in an address to the Theosophical society she said: “The German General Secretary, educated by the Jesuits, has not been able to shake himself sufficiently clear of that fatal influence to allow liberty of opinion within his section.” She also demanded his resignation. The claim of a Jesuit influence was completely without basis, and the final straw, not for Steiner, but for the members of the German section of the Theosophical Society. A few founded the Anthroposophical Society, which very quickly grew from the ranks of the Theosophical society. Besant did not even wait for Steiner to resign; she unilaterally transferred the chairmanship to one Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden. Steiner remained an independent lecturer, and not even a member of the new Anthroposophical Society, until 1923.³³ Here once again we see that the actual facts contradict Staudenmaier's version of them.

Brahmin or otherwise, of ripe age, had come to Europe on his own responsibility or in the name of his Masters to teach his doctrines, nothing would have been more natural or interesting. . . . But it was not in this form that we beheld the new apostle from Adyar. A young Indian, aged thirteen, *initiated by Mr. Leadbeater* ... is proclaimed and presented to the European public as the future teacher of the new era. Krishnamurti, now called Alcyone, has no other credentials than his master's injunctions and Mrs. Besant's patronage. His thirty-two previous incarnations are related at length the early ones going back to the Atlantean period. *These narrations*, given as the result of Mr. Leadbeater's and Mrs. Besant's visions, *are for the most part grotesquely puerile*, and could convince no serious occultist. They are ostensibly designed to prove that for twenty or thirty thousand years the principal personages in the T. S. [Theosophical Society] have been preparing for the "Great Work" which is soon to be accomplished. In the course of *their incarnations*, which remind one of a newspaper novel, these personages are decorated with the great names of Greek mythology, and with the most brilliant stars in the firmament. During a meeting at Benares, Krishnamurti presenting certificates to his followers, received honours like a divine being, many persons present falling at his feet. He does not, however utter a word, but only makes a gesture of benediction, prompted by Mrs. Besant. In reporting this scene Mr. Leadbeater likens it to the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

For this dumb prophet is founded the Order of the Star in the East, which the whole world is invited to join, and of which he is proclaimed the head . . . this passive young prodigy, who has not yet given the world the least proof of having any mission at all... becomes henceforth the centre and cynosure of the T. S., the symbol and sacred ark of the *orthodox faith at Adyar*. As to the doctrine preached by Mrs. Besant, it rests on a perpetual equivocation. She allows the English public at large, to whom she speaks of the coming Christ, to believe that he is identical with the Christ of the Gospels, whereas to her intimates she states what Mr. Leadbeater teaches, and what he openly proclaims in one of his books, *The Inner Life* – namely, that the Christ of the Gospels never existed, and was an invention of the monks of the second century. Such facts are difficult to characterize. I will simply say that they are saddening for all who, like myself, believed in the future of the T. S., for they can only repel clear-sighted and sincere minds..."

Cleather, Alic Leighton. H. P. Blavatsky: A Great Betrayal. Calcutta, India: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1922. Pages 12-13.

³³ Steiner assumed the leadership of the General Anthroposophical Society in December, 1923.

I challenge Peter Staudenmaier, or anyone else for that matter, to find even one primary document where Rudolf Steiner denigrates Krishnamurti because of this skin color, or anyone around him who claims to have heard Steiner mention any such thing.³⁴ Steiner never said a single thing against Krishnamurti himself, only against the idea that the Christ would reincarnate. Quite a few people get mileage out of claiming that “of course” Steiner couldn't bring himself to see a mere Hindu boy as in any way special, but this claim has no factual basis. Steiner would have objected to **anyone** claiming that they or someone else was Christ reincarnated, and said as much himself. Staudenmaier's description teeters at the brink of slander. While he does not directly claim that Steiner actually said anything about Krishnamurti's skin color (a statement that could easily be disproved), he explains Steiner's actions as obviously originating from a racist intent. As legal scholars know, it is extraordinarily difficult to prove anyone's intent under most circumstances. The problem is compounded in a case where the person has been dead over 75 years. There is no actual evidence that Steiner's intent was based on racist feelings (among other things, it would have been completely inconsistent with his character), but this point is more difficult to demonstrate – usually written and spoken evidence is considered in determining someone's intent. There is no such evidence against Steiner.

What separated Steiner from the other India-oriented theosophists from the very beginning was the simple difference that while others may have followed masters, Steiner acknowledged no other authority than his own insight. As we heard above, he made this clear even before joining the Theosophical Society. Further, he demanded that his students form their own judgments about his teachings, and felt that the guru model was inappropriate for modern Europeans.

Staudenmaier has glossed over the fundamental issue that caused the split between the India-oriented Theosophists and Steiner. This issue is not insignificant, and has nothing to do with racism. It is a dispute over the nature of the Christ. To present Steiner's view:

"One could talk about an opposition of the Christian-Occidental and Indian-Oriental principle only if someone wanted to set Wotan above Krishna. But the Christ has nothing to do with all this: from the beginning, He does not belong to any one people, but realizes the most beautiful principle in spiritual science: to acknowledge something without discrimination of color, race and nationality."³⁵

Peter Staudenmaier displays an amazing predilection for presenting aspects of Steiner's thought and biography to their exact opposite.

Staudenmaier also seems quite fixated on the idea of superiority. Steiner did not ever claim the “superiority” or the European over the eastern esoteric traditions. He did claim that the European *method* of occult training was the only one *appropriate* for most modern Europeans,³⁶ and gave quite specific reasons.³⁷ If Staudenmaier wishes to judge the relative merits of the various methods of occult training it would be interesting to hear his criteria and conclusions.

³⁴ The only three prepositions Steiner used were “Knabe”, “Inderknaben” and “Hinduknaben” - “boy”, “Indian boy” and “Hindu boy”, none of which are remotely racist in German, either then or now.

³⁵ Rudolf Steiner. *The Gospel of St. Mark*. 1912. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1950. Page 36. Lecture of September 16th, 1912.

³⁶ Steiner allows that a European *could* take up the yoga path. However, given the demands, including a complete withdrawal from society and subsuming one's own will to the guidance of the guru, it would be an unusual European who could do so successfully.

³⁷ In Steiner's estimation, there are three paths of esoteric development: the Eastern, or Indian path, the Christian-Mystical and the Rosicrucian. Steiner professed to be working in the Rosicrucian tradition:

Paragraph 9:

Immediately after the split, Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society in Germany. Shortly before the outbreak of world war one he moved the fledgling organization's international headquarters to Switzerland. Under the protection of Swiss neutrality he was able to build up a permanent center in the village of Dornach. Blending theosophical wisdom with his own "occult research," Steiner continued to develop the theory and practice of anthroposophy, along with a steadily growing circle of followers, until his death in 1925.

The first inaccuracy lies in claiming that Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society. Marie von Sievers, Michael Bauer and Carl Unger did.³⁸ Rudolf Steiner conscientiously refrained from breaking from the Theosophical Society or from giving his followers any indication that he wished for this to happen. The initiative to found a new society came entirely from the three mentioned above, and Steiner did not join this new society until 1923.

To the second error, I have previously quoted Steiner on his relationship to Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. Steiner was quite clear that there was no "blending" of his research with Theosophical doctrine. He claimed to speak only of what he directly knew. The closest thing to a blending was Steiner's use of the Theosophical vocabulary to describe certain aspects of supersensible experience. However, the use of similar vocabulary does not make for a common worldview. Certainly a scholar can claim that Steiner was wrong in his assertions. However, to do so a scholar would have to present a far more comprehensive argument, and be in possession of a far deeper background in both Theosophical doctrine and Steiner's anthroposophy than Staudenmaier has shown.

Paragraph 10:

The centerpiece of anthroposophical belief is spiritual advancement through karma and reincarnation, supplemented by the access to esoteric knowledge available to a privileged few.

"The eastern way of development (also called yoga). Here an initiated human being living on the physical plane acts as a guru for another human being, who entrusts himself or herself - completely and in all details - to that guru. This method works best for those who, during esoteric development, entirely eliminate their own self and hand it over to the guru. The guru must advise students on their every action." (Page 61)

"The Rosicrucian way of development. This path leaves the pupil at the greatest possible independence. The guru here is no longer a leader, but an adviser who gives direction for the necessary inner training. At the same time, the guru makes certain that, parallel with the esoteric training, there is a definite development of thinking - without which no esoteric training can be carried through. This is because there is something about thinking that does not apply to anything else. When we're on the physical plane, we perceive with the physical sense is only what is on that plane. Astral perceptions are valid for the astral plane; devachanic hearing is valid only in devachan. Thus each plane has its own specific form of perception. But one activity - logical thinking - goes through all worlds. Logic is the same on all three planes. Thus, on the physical plane you can learn something that his valid also for the higher planes. This is the method followed by Rosicrucian training when, on the physical plane, it gives primary attention to thinking, and for this purpose uses the means available on the physical plane. Penetrating thinking can be cultivated by studying spiritual scientific truths, or by practicing thought exercises." (Page 62)

"The Christian way. In this Christian way can be followed with the adviser the teacher knows what has to be done and can rectify mistakes of every step. Keep in mind, however, that in Christian training the great guru is Jesus Christ himself. Hence it is essential to firmly believe in Christ's presence and his life on earth. Without this, feeling of union with him is impossible." (Page 63)

Rudolf Steiner. First Steps in Inner Development. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1999. From a lecture titled "The Way to Inner Development", given on September 2nd, 1906, and printed in volume 95 of the complete works.

³⁸ Christoph Lindenberg, *Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie*, Stuttgart 1997, page 503

The spiritual dimension, in fact, suffuses every aspect of life. For anthroposophists every illness, physical or mental, is karmically determined and plays a role in the soul's development. Natural processes, historical events, and technological mechanisms are all explained through the action of spirits. Students in Waldorf schools are taught, for example, that good spirits live inside of candles and demons live inside of fluorescent light bulbs—an instance of the anti-technological bias that runs throughout anthroposophical thought.

While it is certainly true that a “centerpiece of anthroposophical belief is spiritual advancement through karma and reincarnation” it is also true that “access to esoteric knowledge available to a privileged few” is contrary to the very purpose of anthroposophy.⁴⁰ Steiner repeatedly states that his anthroposophy is accessible to anyone⁴¹. For the purposes of propaganda writing, throwing words like “privileged few” (a catch phrase long savored by propagandists of the left) is doubtless effective. However, it does not accurately represent Steiner’s vision of anthroposophy.

Staudenmaier's next sentence is further puzzling to an anthroposophist. “Natural processes, historical events, and technological mechanisms are all explained through the action of spirits.” It would seem from such a description that Steiner was an extraordinarily superstitious

⁴⁰ Steiner stated that one of the purposes of Anthroposophy is to make public occult knowledge that was previously secret.

⁴¹ According to Steiner, esoteric training is open to anyone.

“Anyone can set out on the esoteric path; it is closed to no one. The mysteries are present in the breast of each human being. All that is required a serious inner work in the possibility to free ourselves of all the obstacles that block this subtle inner life. We must realize that the world’s greatest and most distant aspects are revealed to us in the most intimate ways. Humanity’s wisest members have no other means of attaining great truths in the path described here. They achieve these truths because they discovered the path with themselves, because they knew that they have to practice patiently in steadfastness in carrying out these routines.”

Rudolf Steiner. First Steps in Inner Development. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1999. Page 23. Lecture of 15 Dec 1904 (GA 53) translated by Catherine Creeger.

On the other hand, no one is obligated to walk this path.

“No one is exhorted to become an occultist; one must come to occultism of one’s own volition. Whoever says that we do not need occultism will not need to occupy himself with it. At this time, occultism does not appeal to mankind in general. In fact, it is extremely difficult in the present culture to submit to those rules of conduct which will open the spiritual world.”

Rudolf Steiner. Esoteric Development. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1982. Pages 2-3. Lecture of December 7th, 1905 (GA 54).

Further, Anthroposophy is comprehensible to anyone, precisely through logic.

“These facts [spiritual truths] have been investigated and communicated, and they can be grasped by healthy human intelligence, if this healthy intelligence will be unprejudiced enough not to base its conclusions wholly on what goes by the name of proof, logical deduction, and the like, in regard to the outer sense world. On account of these hindrances it is frequently stated that unless someone is able oneself to investigate supersensible worlds, one cannot understand the results of supersensible research.” (Page 81)

“Once again I would like to emphasize: if these things are investigated, everyone who approaches the results with an unprejudiced mind can understand them with ordinary, healthy human reason –just as he can understand what astronomers or biologists have to say about the world. The results can be tested, and indeed one will find that this testing is the first stage of initiation-knowledge. For initiation-knowledge, one must first have an inclination towards truth, because truth not untruth and error, is one’s object.” (Page 101)

Rudolf Steiner. “Esoteric Development.” New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1982. From GA 305, Lecture of September 20th 1922.

personality. However such a picture is at odds both with his published works and with accounts of his life by those who knew him. Steiner's scientific training was extensive, and he tutored and lectured in depth on the subject. The existence of spiritual beings (angels, nature spirits and even demons) does play a role in anthroposophy, but spiritual beings do not contravene the laws of nature or interfere in the operation of technology. I am not sure where Staudenmaier picked up this opinion. Since most of his cited sources are hostile secondary literature, some of which has been grounds for libel suits in Germany, it is entirely possible that he is unwittingly repeating a fabrication. It would be easier to get to the bottom of the misunderstanding if he actually cited his sources.

Next Staudenmaier claims: "For anthroposophists every illness, physical or mental, is karmically determined and plays a role in the soul's development." He almost got this right, but as usual his misunderstanding serves to create a claim inimical to actual anthroposophy. It is true that all experience, including illness, plays a role in the soul's development. And many (but not all) illnesses have karmic origins. This is an important point, and is the one thing that keeps the anthroposophical understanding of Karma from iron determinism. For there to be free will in the universe, it is important that not everything in the present is determined by the past. If this were not true then there would be no free will. The individual human being has to be free to do both good and evil in order to truly be truly free. If he or she chooses evil, they may very well harm another person who did not "deserve" to be harmed. Karma only states that they must make it right in a future life. If something bad happens to you, there are two possibilities: One: you deserved it - you did bad things, and this misfortune is the past coming back to you. Two: you are the victim of someone else's bad choices (bear your fate as best you can, and rest assured that every bad deed must be made good again). Three: It may be a chance occurrence.⁴² Unless you are a clairvoyant you will never know what caused a particular misfortune – the past (karma) or the free will of the present, or simple chance. Further, forgiveness is the highest spiritual good; if someone owes you for a past misdeed and you forgive them - either by forgoing your inclination for revenge or by renouncing the recompense that is due to you (so that it may be used for those who could use even more help) - then you are performing one of the most powerful deeds a free human being can accomplish. In anthroposophy there is simply no excuse for harming others (weakness is an explanation, but not an excuse - and yes, we are all weak to some degree or other). So no true Anthroposophist can ever look at another person and say, "You deserve your misfortune." Such a thing can never be known without clairvoyant consciousness.

In another amazing claim, Staudenmaier writes: "Students in Waldorf schools are taught, for example, that good spirits live inside of candles and demons live inside of fluorescent light bulbs." It is not clear if this is to apply to all Waldorf students in all such schools worldwide, or if it is an anecdote, or even a joke Staudenmaier heard once. As usual he has indicated no source, so we cannot determine what has caused Mr. Staudenmaier to form this conclusion. Read one way, this statement is incredibly broad. Does Staudenmaier really mean to claim that all Waldorf students everywhere are taught this, or only just a few? I have interviewed dozens of current and former Waldorf students, and none of them recall ever hearing about the good spirits of candles and the demons in florescent lights. Further, I was not able to find any reference to the spiritual characteristics of various lighting sources in the Waldorf Teacher Training materials or any of Rudolf Steiner's indications on pedagogy.

While an anti-technological bias is not unheard of in circles around anthroposophical initiatives and Waldorf schools, it is more a reflection of preexisting biases than something caused by Steiner's views. Steiner was emphatically pro-technology and saw it as a necessary development of the current stage of human consciousness. He did express reservations about

⁴² Steiner's view of karma also allows for chance, or a random influence in the universe. See Rudolf Steiner. Chance, Providence And Necessity. Spring Valley: Anthroposophical Press, 1988.

the misuses of technology, but he stated explicitly and repeatedly that the fault did not lie in technology, but in how human beings used it. His concerns were quite forward looking, and anticipated the ecological awareness that arose broadly in the 1960's.

Paragraph 11:

Steiner's doctrine of reincarnation, embraced by latter-day anthroposophists the world over, holds that individuals choose their parents before birth, and indeed that we plan out our lives before beginning them to insure that we receive the necessary spiritual lessons. If a disembodied soul balks at its own chosen life prospects just before incarnation, it fails to incarnate fully—the source, according to anthroposophists, of prenatal "defects" and congenital disabilities. In addition, "the various parts of our body will be formed with the aid of certain planetary beings as we pass through particular constellations of the zodiac."^{PS4}

The above description, it should be pointed out, is based on a secondary source, a summary of anthroposophy written by Stewart Easton. While I won't go into the individual points, I should point out that Peter Staudenmaier appears not to have actually read the primary sources necessary to formulate such a sweeping overview, relying instead on someone else's efforts. While I have nothing against secondary sources for quickly surveying a field of inquiry, I would suggest that a serious scholar would then go the extra step and actually read the primary sources, citing those to establish a point. Were he to put in the effort, Mr. Staudenmaier would find that the primary sources tend to speak of "should" and "could" and do not bear the dogmatic character that they acquire in his retelling. Doubtless the purpose of writing this three sentence summary is to portray Steiner as silly. While effective, I should point out that such a hack job does not constitute scholarship, and the central accusation of racism has not been established.

Paragraph 12:

Anthroposophists maintain that Steiner's familiarity with the "astral plane," with the workings of various "archangels," with daily life on the lost continent of Atlantis (all central tenets of anthroposophic belief) came from his special powers of clairvoyance. Steiner claimed to have access to the "Akasha Chronicle," a supernatural scripture containing knowledge of higher realms of existence as well as of the distant past and future. Steiner "interpreted" much of this chronicle and shared it with his followers. He insisted that such "occult experience," as he called it, could never be judged or verified by reason, logic, or scientific inquiry. Modern anthroposophy is thus founded on blind faith in Steiner's convictions. Those convictions deserve closer examination.

Here, yet again, Staudenmaier presents statements that are in direct contradiction to the primary sources, and of course without any citations. Steiner did actually call his "occult experience" a science, and **was at pains to claim** that it could be "verified by reason, logic, and scientific inquiry". Whether one believes him or not is a separate matter, however it is factually incorrect to claim that he stated the opposite.

Rudolf Steiner, from the preface to "How to Know Higher Worlds":

"Naturally, to research these facts one must possess the faculties necessary to enter supersensible worlds. But once these worlds have been researched, and the findings communicated, even those who have not themselves perceived the facts can form an adequate judgment of them. Much of what spiritual science presents can, in fact, be easily verified by the application of healthy judgment in a completely unbiased way."⁴³

Or from the Preface to the English edition of "Theosophy":

⁴³ Rudolf Steiner, *How to Know Higher Worlds*, New York 2002, page 8

“There may be those who say that this supersensible world can only have significance for such as already have the power to perceive it, but this is not so. There is no need to be a painter in order to feel the beauty of a painting, yet only a painter can paint it. In the same sense it is unnecessary to be a researcher in the supersensible in order to judge the truth of the results of supersensible research.”⁴⁴

From the Introduction to “Theosophy”:

“Certain powers are required to discover the things referred to [the contents of the book], but if after having been discovered they are made known, every person can understand them who is willing to bring to them unprejudiced logic and a healthy sense of truth. ... Put yourself for a moment in the position of asking, 'If the things asserted here are true, do they afford a satisfying explanation of life?' You will find that the life of every man supplies a confirmation.”⁴⁵

From the Preface to the 16th to 20th editions of “An Outline of Occult Science”:

“The fact that I have entitled this book *Occult Science* has immediately called forth misunderstandings. From many sides was heard, 'What claims to be *science* must not be secret, *occult*.' How little thought was exercised in making such an objection! As though someone who reveals a subject matter would want to be secretive about it. The entire book shows that it was not the intention to designate anything 'occult' but to bring everything into a form that renders it as understandable as any science.”⁴⁶

From the Preface to the 1st edition of “An Outline of Occult Science”:

“Although the book deals with the results of research that lie beyond the power of the intellect bound to the sense world, yet nothing is offered that cannot be comprehended by anyone possessing an unprejudiced reason, a healthy sense of truth, and the wish to employ these human faculties. The author says without hesitation that he would like, above all, to have readers who are not willing to accept on blind faith what is offered here, but who endeavor to examine what is offered by means of the knowledge of their own soul and through the experience of living their own lives (here is not only meant the spiritual scientific tests by supersensible methods of research, but primarily the test that is possible by healthy, unprejudiced thought and common sense). The author knows his book would have no value, were it dependent only on blind faith; it is only useful to the degree it can be vindicated before unbiased reason. Blind faith can so easily mistake the foolish and the superstitious for true. Many who are gladly satisfied with a mere belief in a 'supersensible world' will perhaps find that this book makes too great a demand on the powers of thought.”⁴⁷

The fact that Steiner actually encouraged his followers to verify his statements independently means Staudenmaier's accusation that "modern anthroposophy is thus founded on blind faith in Steiner's convictions" is logically untenable. Even if it can be shown that a minority of his so-

⁴⁴ Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophy*, New York 1971, page xv

⁴⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophy*, New York 1971, pages xx – xxi

⁴⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Occult Science*, Hudson 1972, p. xiii

⁴⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Occult Science*, Hudson 1972,

called followers tends to treat him as a guru against his wishes, it does not follow that everything done in a "far-flung network of public institutions" is "founded on blind faith in Steiner's convictions". Most anthroposophists and others involved in the "far-flung network of public institutions" have an agnostic attitude to Steiner's works. They find his thinking fascinating, and hold his conclusions as working hypotheses while they test his practical indications against reality as they experience it.

As to the Akasha Chronicle, Staudenmaier has failed to explain it properly in either the terms of Blavatsky's Theosophy or Steiner's anthroposophy. Regardless of whether you believe in its existence or whether Steiner could access it, it is not at all that difficult to describe the anthroposophical understanding of its nature. Just read a few primary sources, for example *Cosmic Memory* (cited several times in this article). The original German title is, after all, *Aus der Akasha-Chronik* (translated: From the Akasha Record).

I can understand how, from the name alone, a Chronicle could be taken to designate a text, and referring to it as a scripture is quite an ingenious turn of phrase. However, the clever word-smithing here only reveals an utter failure to examine the actual subject matter. Rather than a scripture (scriptures are by definition text based), it is considered by Steiner to be a record, an impression, of the feelings of everyone who ever lived. As such, it is not a text to be interpreted, it is a residue of feelings to be experienced, and these experiences can then be described.

“What is the Akasha Chronicle? We can form the truest conception of it by realizing that what comes to pass on our earth makes a lasting impression upon certain delicate essences, an impression which can be discovered by a seer who has attained Initiation. It is not an ordinary but a living Chronicle. Suppose a human being lived in the first century after Christ; what he thought, felt and willed in those days, what passed into deeds — this is not obliterated but preserved in this delicate essence. The seer can behold it-not as if it were recorded in a history book, but as it actually happened. How a man moved, what he did, a journey he took-it can all be seen in these spiritual pictures; the impulses of will, the feelings, the thoughts, can also be seen. But we must not imagine that these pictures are images of the physical personalities. That is not the case. To take a simple example. — When a man moves his hand, his will pervades the moving hand and it is this force of will that can be seen in the Akasha Chronicle. What is spiritually active in us and has flowed into the Physical, is there seen in the Spiritual. Suppose, for example, we look for Caesar. We can follow all his undertakings, but let us be quite clear that it is rather his thoughts that we see in the Akasha Chronicle; when he set out to do something we see the whole sequence of decisions of the will to the point where the deed was actually performed. To observe a specific event in the Akasha Chronicle is not easy. We must help ourselves by linking on to external knowledge. If the seer is trying to observe some action of Caesar and takes an historical date as a point of focus, the result will come more easily. Historical dates are, it is true, often unreliable, but they are sometimes of assistance. When the seer directs his gaze to Caesar, he actually sees the person of Caesar in action, phantom-like, as though he were standing before him, speaking with him. But when a man is looking into the past, various things may happen to him if, in spite of possessing some degree of seership, he has not entirely found his bearings in the higher worlds.” Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophy of the Rosicrucian*, London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1981, Page 40⁴⁸, also [online](#).

⁴⁸ Steiner's description was also to take a position against C.W Leadbeater's (a prominent Theosophist) description of the Akasha in a 1903 book titled "Clairvoyance."

"When the visitor to [the mental] plane is not thinking specifically of them in any way, the records simply form a background to whatever is going on, just as the reflections in a pier-glass at the end

While throwing around words like "scripture" and "tenets of belief" is a clever way to impute religious character to Steiner's work (and blind faith on the part of his followers), it remains clear that Staudenmaier has no actual understanding of that which he condescendingly denigrates.

Paragraph 13:

Anthroposophy's Racialist Ideology

Building on theosophy's postulate of root races, Steiner and his anthroposophist disciples elaborated a systematic racial classification system for human beings and tied it directly to their paradigm of spiritual advancement. The particulars of this racial theory are so bizarre that it is difficult for non-anthroposophists to take it seriously, but it is important to understand the pernicious and lasting effects the doctrine has had on anthroposophists and those they've influenced.^{PSS}

This paragraph better describes Alfred Rosenberg than Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy. Here and in the paragraph following Staudenmaier fails to cite any sources. His footnote actually cites Steiner's collected works of 349 volumes (actually, the numbering goes to 354 volumes⁴⁹) of some 90,000 pages. Is this to indicate that Staudenmaier has read all of them? I suspect not, as he has cited the wrong publisher. The International Anthroposophical Society in Dornach does not publish Steiner's complete works; the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung is the publisher. Steiner set up a separate foundation to hold his copyrights after his death, and this foundation is a separate legal entity from the General Anthroposophical Society. I know that these are really just little nitpicking details, but getting the nitpicking details correct is the mark of serious scholarship.

We have already heard Steiner's comments on how little he "built" on any of Theosophy's "postulates." ("No one was left in uncertainty of the fact that I would bring forward in the

of the room might form a background the life of the people in it. It must always be born in mind that under these conditions they are really merely reflections from the ceaseless activity of a great Consciousness upon a far higher plane, and have very much the appearance of an endless succession of *cinematographs*, or living photographs. They do not melt into one another like dissolving views, nor do a series of ordinary pictures follow one other; but the action of the reflected figures constantly goes on as though one were watching the actors on a distance stage. But if the trained investigator turns his attention special especially to any one scene, or wishes to call it up before him, an extraordinary change at once takes place, for this is the plane of thought, and to think of anything is to bring it instantly before you. For example, if a man wills to see the record of that event to which we before referred – the landing of Julius Caesar – he finds himself in the moment not looking at any picture, but standing on the shore among the legionnaires, with the whole scene being enacted around him, precisely in every aspect as he would have seen it if he had stood there in the flash on that autumn morning in the year 55 B.C. Since what he sees is but a reflection, the actors are of course entirely unconscious of them, nor can any effort of his change the course of their action in the smallest degree, except only that he can control the rate at which the drama shall pass before him – can have the event of the whole year rehearsed before his eyes in a single hour, or can at any moment stop the movement altogether and hold the particular scene in view as a picture as long as he chooses."

C.W. Leadbeater. "Clairvoyance." Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1903. 13th Reprinting, 1978. Pages 141-142.

Neither classical Theosophy nor Steiner's Anthroposophy consider the Akasha Chronicle to be a written record.

⁴⁹ For an overview of Steiner's complete works, see the Archives (online at <http://www.rudolfsteiner.com/>). The volume numbers go from 1 to 354; however there are a number of gaps, as well as a few numbers that cover multiple volumes (for example volume 300 is actually 3 books: 300a, 300b and 300c). New volumes come out occasionally, so the total number of books is not yet fixed.

Theosophical Society only the results of my own research through perception."⁵⁰) The claim that Steiner and his disciples tied racial classifications to spiritual advancement is really a two-part claim. I have not studied the works of every last person who claims Steiner as an inspiration, so I cannot say with certainty that no disciple has ever done this. However, I am familiar with Steiner's work, so I will object to that part.

Steiner's "systematic racial classification" is hardly elaborate. Steiner considers there to be 5 races. Or rather, there were five races. Today racial characteristics are, in Steiner's view, unimportant and gradually disappearing. This he considers a natural development in the course of human evolution. Steiner explained that there can be no talk of racial purity; everyone is mixed to one degree or another, and this is natural. This is contained in the book Staudenmaier has cited in the first paragraph: "The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls in relation to Teutonic Mythology" so he ought to be familiar with it. How it came about that there are five races, and what their purpose might have been 20,000 years ago may be elaborate, but to Steiner, racial characteristics in the individual today are unimportant.

Once again we have here a paragraph that is factually inaccurate, partisan and without specific citations. Where, if anywhere, Steiner directly tied spiritual advancement to racial classification cannot be determined from the footnote.

The last sentence tells the reader what they should conclude, without having given any evidence for the assertion.

Paragraph 14:

Steiner asserted that root races follow one another in chronological succession over epochs lasting hundreds of thousands of years, and each root race is further divided into sub-races which are also arranged hierarchically. By chance, as it were, the root race which happened to be paramount at the time Steiner made these momentous discoveries was the Aryan race, a term which anthroposophists use to this day. All racial categories are purely social constructs lacking any scientific meaning, but the notion of an Aryan race is an especially preposterous invention. A favorite of reactionaries in the early years of the twentieth century, the Aryan concept was based on a conflation of linguistic and biological terminology backed up by spurious "research." In other words, it was a complete fabrication which served only to provide a pseudo-scholarly veneer to racist fantasies.

Aside from the fact that in the Theosophical as well as the anthroposophical world-conception, the periods of time described by the term "root races" are tens of thousands of years, and not hundreds of thousands of years, and that time is linear and not, as Staudenmaier conceives, hierarchical, there are several further and more significant errors in his presentation. There is simply no talk of any Aryan race among anthroposophists today or during Steiner's time, and Steiner did not talk of an Aryan race either. Staudenmaier's derision for the very notion of an Aryan race is clearly evident, but his indignation towards anthroposophists is simply misplaced. It is rather sad to see the vehemence with which he denounces so-called Aryan superiority directed against a philosophy that inherently opposes it.

⁵⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The Course of My Life*, New York 1951, page 297

⁵³ "If I may once again introduce a personal note. I had to find a suitable opportunity on which to build. One could not simply crash in on our civilization with the spiritual world." Rudolf Steiner. The Anthroposophic Movement. Bristol, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1993. Page 22.

The words "Root Races" (*Wurzelrassen*) in Steiner's very early theosophical work aren't actually about race in the racial sense at all. When Rudolf Steiner was searching for an audience around turn of the century the only group he found that was in anyway interested in hearing in depth about the spirit and about spiritual matters were members of the Theosophical Society.⁵³ As a consequence, when speaking to these Theosophists Rudolf Steiner would employ terms familiar to them in order to convey the results of his own spiritual research.⁵⁴ Rudolf Steiner, who was an eminent scholar and thoroughly familiar with many areas of inquiry, had also read Blavatsky and was quite familiar with her work. His was not an uncritical take, and he once wrote privately that Blavatsky's work contained the highest spiritual truths mixed with the greatest nonsense⁵⁵. Steiner of course admired certain aspects of Blavatsky's character and some of the things she was able to accomplish⁵⁶, but his was not an uncritical admiration nor was he in complete agreement with all of her thoughts and views. But Steiner did use the terminology that Blavatsky had established in his early esoteric works. As his own work matured Rudolf Steiner moved away from more and more of Blavatsky's terminology, preferring to coin his own terms in German. The very first term that Steiner decided was inappropriate was the term 'Root Race'.⁵⁷

In addition, Rudolf Steiner's conception differed in a number of important ways, particularly concerning of the nature of the time period that comprises the present 'Root Race' and its constituent 'Sub-Races'. Whereas Blavatsky really did consider the racial aspects of the time-division to be of importance, Steiner saw the defining characteristics of these time periods of time to be the **cultural** phenomenon that occurred and the **cultural** achievements of the people's living in them. Thus to Steiner, calling the time periods and their cultural achievements 'Root Races' and 'Sub-Races' appeared to be mistaken.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ "My first work of lecturing within the circles which grew out of the Theosophical Movement had to be planned according to the temper of mind of the groups. Theosophical literature had been read there, and people were used to certain forms of expression. I had to retain these if I wished to be understood. But with the lapse of time and the progress of the work I was able gradually to pursue my own course, even in the forms of expression used." Rudolf Steiner. The Story of My Life. London: Anthroposophical Publishing Co., 1928. Page 313.

⁵⁵ Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner. Correspondence and Documents: 1901-1925. New York: Rudolf Steiner Press 1988. Pages 17-18. He repeated this characterization publicly 20 years later in a lecture on June 10th, 1923:

"In short, Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine is a peculiar book: great truths side by side with terrible rubbish." Rudolf Steiner. The Anthroposophic Movement. Bristol, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1993. Page 23.

⁵⁶ For an example of the high regard that Steiner nonetheless had for Blavatsky, see pages 61 to 63 of Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner. Correspondence and Documents: 1901-1925. New York: Rudolf Steiner Press 1988.

⁵⁷ In 1908 Steiner said:

"When people speak of races today they do so in a way that is no longer quite correct; in theosophical literature, too, great mistakes are made on this subject ... Even in regard to present humanity, for example, it no longer makes sense to speak simply of the development of races. In the true sense of the word this development of the races applies only to the Atlantean epoch ... thus everything that exists today in connection with the [different] races are relics of the differentiation that took place in Atlantean times. We can still speak of races, but only in the sense that the real concept of race is losing its validity."

Steiner, Rudolf. Universe, Earth and Man (GA 105), London 1987, lecture of 16 August 1908.

⁵⁸Steiner:

"For this reason we speak of ages of culture in contra-distinction to races. All that is connected with the idea of race is still a relic of the epoch preceding our own, namely the Atlantean. We are now living in the period of cultural ages ... Today the idea of culture has superseded the idea of

Already as early as 1906, just four years after starting his work as an independent teacher in the context of the Theosophical Society, Rudolf Steiner stated publicly the term 'Root Race' was a misnomer.⁵⁹ By the time he had come to this conclusion, Steiner had already written a number of articles and given numerous lectures employing the term, and to this day they are republished with the term 'Root Race' unaltered. Most editions have an introductory note about the possibly confusing issue of inconsistent terminology. Steiner did rework some of his earlier texts and changed the terms, but he did not update all his writing this way.⁶⁰ Most scholars of Steiner consider his thought and the development of his concepts to be consistent even as the terminology changed. In fact Steiner deliberately and continually employed varying terms in order to force his listeners to focus on his concepts rather than his terminology.

So although he did employ the term as a technical designation for periods of time well know to Theosophical audiences in a few of his earlier works, Steiner did not share the Theosophical understanding of the meaning of the term, and specifically rejected it in favor of a more appropriate term.

race. Hence we speak of the ancient Indian culture, of which the culture announced to us in the Vedas is only an echo. The ancient and sacred Indian culture was the first dawn of post-Atlantean civilization; it followed immediately upon the Atlantean epoch."

Steiner, Rudolf. The Apocalypse of St John (GA 104), London 1977, lecture of 20 June 1908.

Explaining the issue at length in 1909, when he was still the General Secretary of the German section of the Theosophical Society in Germany, Steiner said:

"If we go back beyond the Atlantean catastrophe, we see how human races were prepared. In the ancient Atlantean age, human beings were grouped according to external bodily characteristics even more so than in our time. The races we distinguish today are merely vestiges of these significant differences between human beings in ancient Atlantis. The concept of races is only fully applicable to Atlantis. Because we are dealing with the real evolution of humanity, we [theosophists] have therefore never used this concept of race in its original meaning. Thus, we do not speak of an Indian race, a Persian race, and so on, because it is no longer true or proper to do so. Instead, we speak of an Indian, a Persian, and other periods of civilization. And it would make no sense at all to say that in our time a sixth "race" is being prepared. Though remnants of ancient Atlantean differences, of ancient Atlantean group-soulness, still exist and the division into races is still in effect, what is being prepared for the sixth epoch is precisely the stripping away of race. That is essentially what is happening.

Therefore, in its fundamental nature, the anthroposophical movement, which is to prepare the sixth period, must cast aside the division into races. It must seek to unite people of all races and nations, and to bridge the divisions and differences between various groups of people. The old point of view of race has physical character, but what will prevail in the future will have a more spiritual character.

That is why it is absolutely essential to understand that our anthroposophical movement is a spiritual one. It looks to the spirit and overcomes the effects of physical differences through the force of being a spiritual movement. Of course, any movement has its childhood illnesses, so to speak. Consequently, in the beginning of the theosophical movement the earth was divided into seven periods of time, one for each of the seven root races, and each of these root races was divided into seven sub-races. These seven periods were said to repeat in a cycle so that one could always speak of seven races and seven sub-races. However, we must get beyond the illness of childhood and clearly understand that the concept of race has ceased to have any meaning in our time."

Rudolf Steiner. The Universal Human: The Evolution of Individuality. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1990. Pages 12-13. Lecture of December 4th, 1909.

⁶⁰ One prominent example is the book Cosmic Memory, which is a collection of Rudolf Steiner's early writings on Atlantis and Lemuria, initially published in serial form in the periodical "Lucifer". Theosophical terminology, including the term 'Root Race' is present throughout, and Steiner never revised the volume during his lifetime.

Why did Blavatsky name the current Root Race “Aryan”? The word "Aryan" was originally a linguistic term for all languages in the Indo-European family.⁶¹ It has nothing to do with racial characteristics. The term was borrowed by racists in the 19th Century, and by the end of the Nazi era had completely lost its original linguistic meaning, such that even linguists no longer use it. By 1906 Steiner had renamed the Theosophical "Aryan" epoch (which is described as lasting 25,000 years and starting about 15,000 years ago) the "Post-Atlantean," as he noticed that the word "Aryan" bore less and less its original meaning. Only in older documents (such as *Cosmic Memory*, from 1904) will you find that term “Aryan” used, and it is good to keep the historical context and the changing meaning of linguistic terms in mind. I think it is historically ignorant to call all 19th Century linguists who used the term racist; and likewise its use in most early Theosophical literature was not intended racially.

Stating that anthroposophists use the term “Aryan race” to this day is mistaken, and reveals an utter ignorance of all subsequent anthroposophical literature and a complete lack of familiarity with current anthroposophical discourse. Anthroposophy was barely three years old when Steiner dropped its use as misleading, and the number of anthroposophists at that point was small. Since that time it has been universally referred to as the Post-Atlantean Epoch. The smaller epochs are named after the culture (culture, not race) that is considered most prominent during that era. However, it is explicitly clear that these are not the only cultures of importance during that era. As Steiner was quoted as saying above, every culture is an important part of the whole, just as every individual is an important part of the whole of humanity. The present 5th Post-Atlantean Cultural Epoch is most frequently referred to only as “the 5th Post-Atlantean Cultural Epoch.”⁶² It has also been called, in numerous places, the Anglo-Germanic, after the dominant cultural trends of our time. I have not found a single reference to it being called the “nordic-germanic sub-race” in Steiner's works or in subsequent literature. In fact Staudenmaier has not listed any reference for this alleged fact; it stands as a fabrication.⁶³

Peter Staudenmaier is clearly well versed in the literature of race and European racism. His explanation of race as a social construct is commonly accepted, and whether race has any scientific meaning has also been debated at quite some length, and the debate itself summarized numerous times. The history of "the Aryan Race" as an idea has been researched quite thoroughly⁶⁴ and Staudenmaier has cited several excellent books on the subject. What he has failed to do is properly understand Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy before painting them racist with broad strokes.

Paragraph 15:

Anthroposophy's promotion of this ridiculous doctrine is disturbing enough. But it is compounded by Steiner's further claim that—in yet another remarkable coincidence—the most advanced group

⁶¹ For a concise overview, see: Mosse, George. Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism. New York: Howard Fertig, 1978, especially pages 39-40.

⁶² Among literally thousands of examples:

"We know that since the great Atlantean catastrophe... there have been five great epochs of civilization. We designate these as the ancient Indian, the ancient Persian, the Egypto-Chaldean, the Greco-Latin, and the epoch we presently live in."

Steiner, Rudolf. The Universal Human: The Evolution of Individuality. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1990. Page 7.

⁶³ This demonstrates that it is necessary to fabricate source material to make a case against Anthroposophy, a thoroughly cosmopolitan and progressively humanistic philosophy.

⁶⁴ See among others Mosse, George. Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism. New York: Howard Fertig, 1978, especially pages 39-45.

within the Aryan root race is currently the nordic-germanic sub-race. Above all, anthroposophy's conception of spiritual development is inextricable from its evolutionary narrative of racial decline and racial advance: a select few enlightened members evolve into a new "race" while their spiritually inferior neighbors degenerate. Anthroposophy is structured around a hierarchy of biological and psychological as well as "spiritual" capacities and characteristics, all of them correlated to race.

So first it is claimed that anthroposophy promotes the discredited idea of an Aryan race. This turns out to be untrue – based on a misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the source material combined with a willful ignorance of the historical context. Now it is claimed anthroposophists believe the nordic-germanic sub-race to be the most advanced within the Aryan root race. This cannot even be called a misunderstanding; Steiner has not combined the words “nordic” or “germanic” with “sub-race” anywhere. I repeat, there is no such phrase in as the “nordic-germanic sub-race” anywhere in Steiner's complete works. There are a few references to nordic-germanic *mythology*, and a few to nordic-germanic *peoples*, but nowhere is there such a sub-race.⁶⁵ (Nor does such a sub-race exist anywhere in Blavatsky's work.) This then culminates in Staudenmaier's claim that anthroposophists believe in some sort of nordic-germanic superiority. Given that the nordic-germanic sub-race doesn't exist, it is not surprising that this, too, is nowhere present in any of Steiner's work. And it certainly is not in Steiner's book *The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls*, where we hear him praise the importance of all races in human development and tell his listeners that they will reincarnate in every race. The description in the above paragraph can only be characterized as a complete fabrication. And this is the only way to make a racist out of Steiner: to fabricate quotes.

The "narrative" of racial decline and advance is actually a description of cultural progression. Mr. Staudenmaier has completely misunderstood his source material, or more likely limited himself to a very narrow range of secondary material that misrepresents the source material, and this, combined with a bit of imagination and a determination to prove his polemical point at all costs has resulted in this unrecognizable presentation of Steiner and anthroposophy. The claim that all anthroposophy is structured around a biological hierarchy correlated to so-called spiritual capacities and characteristics, and that this is correlated to race, is simply indefensible. Indeed, it can only be made by making up racist beliefs, beliefs nowhere evident in any of Steiner's work. And of course Staudenmaier makes the claim without any sort of support in the form of citations from primary source material.

Paragraph 16:

The affinities with Nazi discourse are unmistakable. Wolfgang Treher makes a convincing case that Steiner's racial theories, especially the repeated scheme of a small minority evolving further while a large mass declines, bear striking similarities even in detail to Hitler's own theories. He concludes: "Concentration camps, slave labor and the murder of Jews constitute a praxis whose key is perhaps to be found in the 'theories' of Rudolf Steiner."^{PS6}

Having set up the claim with a number of misrepresentations and some fabricated source material, Staudenmaier then concludes: "The affinities with Nazi discourse are unmistakable." This is hardly surprising, and simply a sad indication of the level of Staudenmaier's scholarship.

It is not in the least surprising that Staudenmaier would rely on Treher as a source. Treher's self-published attempt at retroactively psychologizing both Hitler and Steiner in one volume was not taken seriously in 1966 (hence its failure to find a publisher) and is no more convincing

⁶⁵ Steiner had long since discarded the use of the term 'sub-race'; it is nowhere in the book Staudenmaier cites.

today. The supposition that concentration camps are the logical culmination of Rudolf Steiner's life work is one of the vilest perversions of everything that Steiner stood for that I have yet encountered.

Paragraph 17:

Steiner didn't shy away from describing the fate of those left behind by the forward march of racial and spiritual progress. He taught that these unfortunates would "degenerate" and eventually die out. Like his teacher Madame Blavatsky, Steiner rejected the notion that Native Americans, for example, were nearly exterminated by the actions of European settlers. Instead he held that Indians are "dying out of their own nature."^{PS7} Steiner also taught that "lower races" of humans are closer to animals than to "higher races" of humans. Aboriginal peoples, according to anthroposophy, are descended from the already "degenerate" remnants of the third root race, the Lemurians, and are devolving into apes. Steiner referred to them as "stunted humans whose progeny, the so-called wild peoples, inhabit certain parts of the earth today."^{PS8}

This straw man, an unrecognizable Steiner, is further abused here, relegated to a pupil of Blavatsky who allegedly promulgated every nasty thing she ever wrote. Steiner's relationship to Blavatsky is a complex subject, but while many notice at a superficial glance that there are indeed similarities, a simple teacher-pupil relationship posited from their chronological succession does not find support in any in-depth investigation.

Steiner, a cosmopolitan humanist renowned for his calls for a universal brotherhood of man and the overcoming of racial and ethnic prejudice, is here depicted on the flimsiest pretenses as a heartless spiritualistic racist. Steiner deplored the treatment of Native Americans by the Europeans, yet a comment he made explaining their genetic susceptibility to diseases – a point today well established – is here offered as evidence of his callous disregard for their suffering and even overt racism. The quote offered here is greatly helped by some context. Steiner wrote:

"The Native American population did not die out because this pleased the Europeans, but because the Native American population had to acquire such forces as lead to their dying out."⁶⁶

This sentence does not make a lot of sense on its own. It is part of a larger thought that Steiner expressed over several pages on how the geography of the earth influenced the formation of racial characteristics in past epochs.⁶⁷ In the west, said Steiner, the forces that lead to the overcoming of the influence of racial characteristics are strongest, and this he tied to the physical weakness behind the death of so many Native Americans. Though not explicitly mentioned in this context, this weakness was immunological, as research from the last 40 years has indicated. Steiner strongly deplored the behavior of the Europeans towards the Native Americans, but the simple fact remains that most of the inhabitants of the Americas in 1491 would not have survived the contact with Europe even if not a single one as murdered directly at the hands of a white man. Steiner intuited this even though the science of his day had no concepts to express why.

The statement that aboriginal peoples are devolving into apes I find nowhere in Staudenmaier's cited source (which I have printed in its entirety below in my comments on Staudenmaier's

⁶⁶ Translation by Daniel Hindes. In the original:

"Nicht etwa deshalb, weil es den Europäern gefallen hat, ist die indianische Bevölkerung ausgestorben, sondern weil die indianische Bevölkerung die Kräfte erwerben mußte, die sie zum Aussterben führten."

Steiner, Rudolf. Die Mission Einzelner Volksseelen. Dornach: Verlag der Rudolf Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung, 1962. (GA 121, page 75).

⁶⁷ In the present time, indeed for the last 10,000 years, the task of humanity has been to overcome racial divisions, according to Rudolf Steiner.

footnote 8) and is completely foreign to Steiner's anthroposophy. Steiner's actual statement is: "These [the declining remnants of the Lemurian civilization] languished, and their descendants inhabit certain parts of the earth as the so-called wild peoples to this day." There is nothing about apes. Even Staudenmaier's use of the word "degenerate" is a mistranslation. "Verfall" means "degeneration" only in biological contexts. When speaking of cultures or civilizations, it means "decline." Steiner did not say that they physically degenerated; he said that their culture declined.

In this paragraph we have here another fabrication and a mistranslation. Of course this is really the only way to make Steiner into a racist, but it is sad to see it being done so deliberately here.

Paragraph 18:

The fourth root race which emerged between the Lemurians and the Aryans were the inhabitants of the lost continent of Atlantis, the existence of which anthroposophists take as literal fact. Direct descendants of the Atlanteans include the Japanese, Mongolians, and Eskimos. Steiner also believed that each people or Volk has its own "ethereal aura" which corresponds to its geographic homeland, as well as its own "Volksgeist" or national spirit, an archangel that provides spiritual leadership to its respective people.

In anthroposophical literature "Atlantis" is the period of time in human development that ended with the end of last great Ice Age about 15000 years ago. Yes, "Atlantis" is primarily a period of time, like "the Romans". It is also a location. As to descendants, everyone alive today is a descendant of both the Lemurians and the Atlanteans: the Europeans no less than the Japanese, Mongolians and Eskimos.

Steiner did not tie racial characteristics to geographic "homelands", nor has Mr. Staudenmaier offered any citation as to where he thinks Steiner might have done so. Bold assertions appear sufficient for his purposes.

Paragraph 19:

Steiner propagated a host of racist myths about "negroes." He taught that black people are sensual, instinct-driven, primitive creatures, ruled by their brainstem. He denounced the immigration of blacks to Europe as "terrible," "brutal," "dreadful," and decried its effects on "blood and race." He warned that white women shouldn't read "negro novels" during pregnancy, otherwise they'd have "mulatto children." In 1922 he declared, "The negro race does not belong in Europe, and it is of course nothing but a disgrace that this race is now playing such a large role in Europe."^{PS9}

Staudenmaier has again cited a secondary source. We have a bunch of disturbing single-word "quotes" - direct quotes attributed to Rudolf Steiner himself. Beyond the problem that Steiner did not speak of "Negroes" (for the simple reason that Steiner spoke German and not English) an objective reader wanting to examine the context is prevented by the fact that they are extracted from a secondary source with no reference to the original sources. Further, there is no indication that Staudenmaier has investigated the context himself. Instead he presents single words plucked almost at random and arranged to suit his thesis. This is simple character assassination, not scholarship.

Steiner's joke about "mulatto children" was made in a specific context. While insensitive today, it was nevertheless a joke. As a scholar who had edited Goethe's scientific writings and written numerous essays on evolution Steiner was well aware of the influence of genes on the characteristics of offspring. That Staudenmaier would repeat this joke as a serious statement of Steiner's beliefs speaks to either his credulity or his duplicity in dealing with the issue of Steiner's view of race. That is, either Staudenmaier did not actually check the context of the

original when he wrote from his secondary source, and thus did not notice that his secondary source was misrepresenting Steiner, or, knowing that this was actually a joke, he represented it as a serious statement anyway for polemical effect.

The statement that blacks do not belong in Europe also has a specific context. It was made in at least two places in the complete works, and always referred to the French colonial troops, conscripted in the French colonies and made to fight on the French side of the First World War. These troops were then used in the occupation of the Ruhr around the time that Steiner made these statements. The German public at large was up in arms about the issue. What Steiner clearly meant was that it was not proper for Africans to be impressed into service in foreign European wars. Steiner did not imply that a black person who that wanted to come to Europe of his or her own free will ought not to.

Paragraph 20:

But the worst insult, from an anthroposophical point of view, is Steiner's dictum that people of color can't develop spiritually on their own; they must either be "educated" by whites or reincarnated in white skin. Europeans, in contrast, are the most highly developed humans. Indeed "Europe has always been the origin of all human development." For Steiner and for anthroposophy, there is no doubt that "whites are the ones who develop humanity in themselves. [. . .] The white race is the race of the future, the spiritually creative race."^{PS10}

Once again we have a collection of short quotes strung together for effect, without any sort of context. Staudenmaier writes confidently of the conclusions that we should draw from his arrangement. While doubtless effective polemic, this is not scholarship by any stretch of the imagination, nor does it in anyway resemble Steiner's actual thought.

Paragraph 21:

Anthroposophists today often attempt to excuse or explain away such outrageous utterances by contending that Steiner was merely a product of his times. This apologia is utterly unconvincing. First, Steiner claimed for himself an unprecedented degree of spiritual enlightenment which, by his own account, completely transcended his own time and place; he also claimed, and anthroposophists believe that he had, detailed knowledge of the distant future. Second, this argument ignores the many dedicated members of Steiner's generation who actively opposed racism and ethnocentrism. Third, and most telling, anthroposophists continue to repeat Steiner's racist nonsense to this day.

The apologia is not only unconvincing, it is unnecessary; Steiner did not hold any view remotely resembling the ones here attributed to him. We can only wonder what counterargument to his blatant misrepresentations Staudenmaier would be willing to entertain. It is little wonder that anthroposophists are unwilling to stand by and see Steiner's record of struggle for equality being maligned and his work towards racial equality turned into its opposite. It appears Staudenmaier is unwilling to consider even the theoretical possibility that an argument counter to his thesis might have any validity; they are all apologies. Going further into the problems with Staudenmaier's objections, Steiner was generally quite modest about his spiritual enlightenment. When he spoke about his abilities, it was usually in the third person, as in "when the initiate has reached the fourth stage of enlightenment, he is able to see..." and did not specify which stage he felt he had reached. Nor did he claim that his knowledge transcended time and space. And Steiner's indications about the future were in the most general terms, and are not detailed at all. The mere fact that Steiner spoke of events the he felt likely to happen in the future seems to bother Staudenmaier. Steiner's statements are for the most part the equivalent of saying today that bioengineering will play a role in the future.

Finally, Staudenmaier will try to build an entire case for the racism of present-day anthroposophists on a few examples below, attempting to characterize a movement of some half a million people by the actions of at most a few dozen black sheep. Yet even here it is necessary for him to mischaracterize events and misrepresent the actual facts.

Paragraph 22:

In 1995 there was a scandal in the Netherlands when it became publicly known that Dutch Waldorf schools were teaching "racial ethnography," where children learn that the "black race" has thick lips and a sense of rhythm and that the "yellow race" hides its emotions behind a permanent smile. In 1994 the Steinerite lecturer Rainer Schnurre, at one of his frequent seminars for the anthroposophist adult school in Berlin, gave a talk with the rather baffling title "Overcoming Racism and Nationalism through Rudolf Steiner." Schnurre emphasized the essential differences between races, noted the "infantile" nature of blacks, and alleged that due to immutable racial disparities "no equal and global system can be created for all people on earth" and that "because of the differences between races, sending aid to the developing world is useless."^{PS11}

So here again we have a misleading statement extrapolated from a basic fact. A scandal in the Netherlands broke when it became publicly known that **one** teacher in **one** Dutch Waldorf school was teaching "racial ethnography". She was fired. At the time the press attempted to determine whether this was common to all Waldorf schools, but found out that, in fact, it was not. Further, the claims that Dutch Waldorf schools might be propagating racism were promptly investigated in by the State Education Inspection Service of the Netherlands. The results of this investigation were made public on March 28th, 1995:

"The investigation into Steiner Schools in the Netherlands, carried out by the State Education Inspection Service at the request of Deputy Minister Netelenbos, conclusively proved that there is no evidence of racism in the Steiner Schools. In fact much attention is given in the schools to developing an awareness among the students so that racism is actually countered."⁶⁸

The commission investigated all 95 Waldorf schools in the Netherlands. While it found no evidence of racism, it did uncover instances of racial stereotyping in seven of the 95 schools. The Association of Rudolf Steiner Schools in the Netherlands instituted new procedures and a curriculum review in order to ensure that racial stereotyping would not reoccur.⁶⁹

The Anthroposophical Society of the Netherlands also formed a commission with the express purpose of examining all 90,000 pages of Rudolf Steiner's collected works (something Peter Staudenmaier with his predilection for secondary sources has certainly not done). The commission was tasked with answering three questions:

1. Does anthroposophy contain a racist or race-based doctrine?
2. Do the works of Rudolf Steiner contain statements by Rudolf Steiner that can be understood to be racially discriminating?
3. Do the works of Dutch authors on Waldorf education contain elements of racial discrimination?

To the first question the commission found no racial bias in Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. To the second question the commission found that out of 90,000 pages, "...sixteen statements, if they were in public by a person on his or her own authority, could be a violation of the prohibition of racial discrimination under the Criminal Code of the Netherlands." That is, 16 statements by Steiner, if made by someone today, would legally be considered racially discriminatory in the Netherlands. Or simply stated, that 16 statements of Steiner's are

⁶⁸ Joint press release of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science, and Cultural Affairs, and the Association of Rudolf Steiner Schools in the Netherlands. Translation Detlef Hardorp.

⁶⁹ For a detailed description see: <http://www.waldorfanswers.org/Netherlands.htm>

offensive. The commission also sought to answer the questions of historical context, as well as the role that these statements played in Steiner's overall thought.⁷⁰ These are the real questions for historians to grapple with. Making selective use of these quotations for polemical purposes is made easier by the commission's having collected them all in one place. Facile polemics should not be confused with actual scholarship, however, and Staudenmaier has not shown any evidence of familiarity with the broader scope of Steiner's thought, including the literally hundreds of statements about the equality of all people and the need for respect and tolerance.

Now I am not familiar with the case of Rainer Schnurre (nor, apparently, is Staudenmaier, who's cited sources are limited to the reference on one page of Oliver Gedden's *Rechte Ökologie*). But even if everything claimed there is true (and does not represent any selective presentation or out-of-context quotation of Mr. Schnurre's views) we have one individual with racist views. By no standard of scholarship does this prove that an entire group of tens of thousands of people who have read the same author must therefore also be racists, nor does it tell us anything about Steiner's own views.

Paragraph 23:

Incidents such as these are distressingly common in the world of anthroposophy. The racial mindset that Steiner bestowed on his faithful followers has yet to be repudiated. And it may well never be repudiated, since anthroposophy lacks the sort of critical social consciousness that could counteract its flagrantly regressive core beliefs. Indeed anthroposophy's political outlook has been decidedly reactionary from the beginning.

This polemical paragraph shows the lengths to which Staudenmaier will let his rhetorical flourishes go. Unfortunately, it has no factual basis. Anthroposophy has never repudiated its racist past because no such racist past exists. Staudenmaier's rhetoric cannot resist going further, accusing anthroposophy of being without any critical social consciousness, when Staudenmaier himself presented evidence contrary earlier in this same article!⁷¹ Based on two individual incidents involving two individual people (but presented as being common to all thousand-some Waldorf schools and tens of thousands of anthroposophists) it is stated without further evidence that this type of thing is "distressingly common in the world of anthroposophy." This is a group that numbers somewhere between 100,000 and 2 million people worldwide, depending on the criteria for inclusion. I would suggest that were this the case, anthroposophy would not exist as it does in the world today. Waldorf Schools exist in South African townships, in Taiwan and Peru, in Brazil, Columbia and the Philippines – all run by locals as grassroots initiatives. It is hard to call such a movement "lacking in critical social consciousness" and couched in "flagrantly regressive core beliefs."

The sweeping statement that anthroposophy is politically reactionary is also not supported by any evidence presented in this article. The question will be dealt with at some length further down.

Paragraph 24:

The Social Vision of Anthroposophy

Steiner's political perspective was shaped by a variety of influences. Foremost among these was Romanticism, a literary and political movement that had a lasting impact on German culture in the nineteenth century. Like all broad cultural phenomena, Romanticism was politically complex, inspiring both left and right. But the leading political Romantics were explicit reactionaries and

⁷⁰ For an English version of the press release announcing the release of the final version of the commission's report see: <http://hem.passagen.se/thebee/comments/Holland/Dutch-FinalPressSummary.htm>

⁷¹ In paragraph 4

vehement nationalists who excluded Jews, even baptized ones, from their forums; they were bitter opponents of political reform and favored a strictly hierarchical, semi-feudal social order. The Romantic revulsion for nascent "modernity," hostility toward rationality and enlightenment, and mystical relation to nature all left their mark on Steiner's thought.

To sum up the paragraph, Steiner was hostile to rationality and enlightenment, favored a mystical relation to nature and was revulsed by "modernity," and was therefore influenced by the Romantics. Since he was influenced by the Romantics, he must also share their opposition to political reform and favor a strictly hierarchical, semi-feudal social order, and was likely an explicit reactionary and vehement nationalist who excluded Jews. That is the claim. Besides vastly oversimplifying the Romantic Movement, is such a claim substantiated? Quite simply, no. I would suggest that a serious scholar should examine Steiner's actual life and work (rather than hostile summaries thereof) and then determine, after such an investigation, which of the conventional labels fit.

Romanticism as a movement was indeed complex, as Staudenmaier states. Should we even begin to agree on who the leading *political* romantics might have been, Steiner was studiously apolitical his entire life; therefore indicting him based on the *political* goals of some members of an earlier group that shared aspects of his *philosophical attitude* is quite a stretch. Yet it is only by such long shot guilt-by-association arguments that Steiner can be made into an anti-Semite reactionary. Nothing in his writing would support such a claim. The absurdity of this charge becomes especially evident in examining the claim that Steiner was a social reactionary. In actual fact Steiner's one foray into politics occurred when he proposed a fundamental social reform in his Threefold Social Order, maligned below. While advocating the Threefold Social Order, Steiner spent over a year agitating and attempted to build support from the grassroots.⁷²

Staudenmaier has made some bold assertions about the sources of influence on Steiner's intellectual development. He is simply wrong, both on the actual content of Steiner's thought and its influences. Further, he has not offered any examples to establish his claims. Quite simply he is woefully unqualified to formulate such sweeping judgments.

Paragraph 25:

During his Vienna period Steiner also fell under the sway of Nietzsche, the outstanding anti-democratic thinker of the era, whose elitism made a powerful impression. The radical individualism of Max Stirner further contributed to the young Steiner's political outlook, yielding a potent philosophical melange that was waiting to be catalyzed by some dynamic reactionary force. The latter appeared to Steiner soon enough in the form of Ernst Haeckel and his Social Darwinist creed of Monism. Haeckel (1834-1919) was the founder of modern ecology and the major popularizer of evolutionary theory in Germany. Steiner became a partisan of Haeckel's views, and from him anthroposophy inherited its environmentalist predilections, its hierarchical model of human development, and its tendency to interpret social phenomena in biological terms.

This next paragraph is a beautiful work of polemic, once again devoid of even the slightest hint of substantiation. It also has the chronology wrong, for Steiner encountered the works of Haeckel long before reading Nietzsche, and Stirner was the last of the three whose works Steiner read. Most would agree that Nietzsche was an outstanding anti-democratic thinker of his era, but did Steiner fall under his sway in the manner implied? And what was Stirner's influence on Steiner? Did it really yield "a potent philosophical mélange that was waiting to be catalyzed by some dynamic reactionary force"? (And why must it be a reactionary force that catalyzes this potent philosophical mélange? Could it not have just as easily been progressive force? Ah yes,

⁷² Steiner's initial attempts to interest leading politicians yielded no results, so he turned to the grassroots.

the thesis is that Steiner was a proto-Nazi, so he must be socially reactionary.) Finally, what was Steiner's relationship to Haeckel? It seems that Steiner is quite a passive sponge under all this influencing. Was he the only person to have read Nietzsche, Stirner and Haeckel? Must anyone of that period who read all three also become an anti-democratic radical individualist and Social Darwinist? Let us look at the allegations one at a time:

Steiner's relationship to Nietzsche

Probably the best source for understanding Nietzsche's influence on Steiner is Rudolf Steiner's book Friedrich Nietzsche, Ein Kämpfer Gegen Sein Zeit (a title I would translate as: *Friedrich Nietzsche: a fighter doing battle against his times*) published 1895. Lest his readers mistake him for a disciple of Nietzsche, Rudolf Steiner says on the very first page:

In the words in which he expressed his relationship to Schopenhauer, I would like to describe my relationship to Nietzsche: "I belong to those readers of Nietzsche who, after they have read the first page, know with certainty that they will read all pages, and listen to every word he has said. My confidence in him was there immediately... I understood him as if he had written just for me, in order to express all that I would say intelligibly but immediately and foolishly." One can speak thus and yet be far from acknowledging oneself as a "believer" in Nietzsche's world conception. But Nietzsche himself could not have been further from wishing to have such "believers." Did he not put into Zarathustra's mouth these words:

You say you believe in Zarathustra, but of what account is Zarathustra? You are my believer, but of what account are all believers?

You have not searched for yourself as yet; there you found me. Thus do all believers, but, for that reason, there is so little in all believing.

Now I advise you to forsake me, and find *yourselves*; and only when you have denied me will I return to you.

Nietzsche is no Messianic founder of a religion; therefore he can wish for friends who support his opinion, but he can not wish for confessors to his teaching, who give up their own selves to find his.⁷³

This theme Steiner repeated frequently when referring to Nietzsche. In a memorial address given September 13th, 1900, Steiner speaks of himself in the following way:

It is strange that with the infatuation for Nietzsche in our day, someone must appear whose feelings, no less than many others, are drawn to the particular personality, and yet who, in spite of this, must constantly keep before him the deep contradictions which exist between this type of spirit, and the ideas and feelings of those who represent themselves as adherents of his world conception.⁷⁴

Or in an article in the Wiener Klinischer Rundschau (14th year, No. 30, 1900):

For Nietzsche does not work upon his contemporaries through the logical power of his arguments. On the contrary, the wide dissemination of his concepts is to be traced to the same reasons which make it possible for zealots and fanatics to play their role in the world at all times.⁷⁵

⁷³ Steiner, Rudolf. Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom. Englewood, NJ: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1960. Pages 42-43.

⁷⁴ Steiner, Rudolf. Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom. Englewood, NJ: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1960. Pages 201.

⁷⁵ Steiner, Rudolf. Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom. Englewood, NJ: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1960. Pages 153-154.

These are hardly the words of a man "under the sway of" Nietzsche. We find Steiner repeatedly distancing himself from the "zealots and fanatics" or even ordinary "adherents" of Nietzsche's world conception.

Steiner's book Friedrich Nietzsche, Ein Kämpfer Gegen Sein Zeit is divided into three sections:

1. a critical analysis of Nietzsche's character,
2. an exploration of the idea of the Superman, and
3. an attempt to trace Nietzsche's path of development.

We find not the fawning applause of an acolyte, but instead a profound effort to place Nietzsche in the context of various directions in the philosophy of his times, an effort that to this day ranks as one of the more insightful attempted. Put quite simply, Steiner was never a Nietzsche disciple, never a follower. He was deeply familiar with Nietzsche's work (and was even offered the position of editor of a planned edition of Nietzsche's complete works, a job he turned down when it became evident that he would not have editorial freedom and full access to the archives⁷⁶) and appreciated elements of them.⁷⁷

Steiner's relationship to Max Stirner

Steiner appears to have been introduced to the philosophy of Max Stirner by John Henry Mackay, whom Steiner met while in Weimar and with whom he became close friends after moving to Berlin.⁷⁸ Mackay was a self-professed 'individualistic anarchist' and had edited Stirner's writing for a new edition. Steiner was attracted to the individualist thrust of Stirner's work, comparing it to his own philosophical individualism as expressed in Philosophy of Freedom, Steiner's 1894 book.

Steiner's relationship to Haeckel

Rudolf Steiner's curious relationship to Ernst Haeckel has been much remarked upon. Indeed, it has been the subject of several books⁷⁹. Just what did Steiner, of all people, see in the "Pope of Monism"? Rudolf Steiner himself gave an answer, and no one who has gone into any depth on

⁷⁶ For the details, see Chapter 17 of Christoph Lindenberg's Rudolf Steiner, Eine Biographie. Stuttgart: Freies Geistesleben, 1997. Pages 240-260.

⁷⁷ For example, in his book, Steiner praised Nietzsche's stance against nationalism:

"The patriotic feelings of his German compatriots are also repugnant to Nietzsche's instincts. He cannot make his feelings and his thinking dependent upon the circles of the people amid whom he was born and reared, nor upon the age in which he lives. "It is so small-townish," he says in his *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* (Schopenhauer as an Educator) to make oneself duty-bound to opinions which no longer bind one a few hundred miles away. Orient and Occident are strokes of chalk which someone draws before our eyes to make fools of our timidity. I will make the attempt to come to freedom, the young soul says to itself; and then should it be hindered because accidentally two nations hate and fight each other, or because an ocean lies between two parts of the earth, or because there a religion is taught which did not exist a few thousand years previously?" The soul experiences of the Germans during the War of 1870 found so little echo in his soul that "while the thunder of battle passed from Wörth over Europe," he sat in a small corner of the Alps, "brooding and puzzled, consequently most grieved, and at the same time not grieved," and wrote down his thoughts about the Greeks."

Steiner, Rudolf. Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom. Englewood, NJ: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1960. Page 45.

⁷⁸ Hemleben, Johannes. Rudolf Steiner, An Illustrated Biography. London: Sophia, 2000. Page 81.

⁷⁹ Among others, Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner und Ernst Haeckel*, Stuttgart 1965 and Karl Ballmer, *Rudolf Steiner und Ernst Haeckel*, Hamburg 1929, as well as just about every biographer who has dealt with Steiner in any depth. Staudenmaier has cited some of these without apparently having mastered their contents.

the subject has yet found it necessary to object to Steiner's description. In Haeckel Steiner saw the seeds of a few important ideas, and these he championed. The rest, including Monism, he cared little for but did not speak of this publicly, at least not initially. In examining this question we are really delving into the cultural battles of a bygone era, but this is important in order to understand Haeckel, Steiner, and their cultural milieu.

Steiner's view of Haeckel was more or less consistent throughout his lifetime. In public Steiner expressed himself carefully about certain aspects of Haeckel's thought while maintaining a silence concerning other portions with which he disagreed. Privately, he was considerably more direct about his opinions. The following quote is probably the most concise summary of Steiner's views. It was written by Steiner for Eduard Schuré, a writer and publicist for esotericism and author of the book *The Great Initiates*. Schuré was at that point an admirer of Steiner's, and had asked for information about Steiner's intellectual and spiritual background. The answer was several pages, written by Steiner in Barre, Alsace (France), in 1907 when Steiner was 46, and today referred to as "The Barre Document".

And not long afterwards Haeckel's 60th birthday took place, celebrated with great festivity in Jena. Haeckel's friends invited me. I saw Haeckel for the first time on that occasion. His personality is enchanting, and stands in complete contrast to the tone of his writings. If, at any time, he had studied even just a small amount of philosophy, in which he is not merely a dilettante but a child, he would quite surely have drawn the highest spiritual conclusions from his epoch-making phylogenetic studies.

Now, in spite of all German philosophy, in spite of all the rest of German culture, Haeckel's phylogenetic idea is the most significant event in German intellectual life in the latter half of the nineteenth century. And there is no better scientific foundation to esotericism than Haeckel's teaching. Haeckel's teaching is exemplary, but Haeckel is the worst commentator on it. Culture is not served by exposing Haeckel's weaknesses to his contemporaries, but by explaining to them the greatness of his phylogenetic concept. This I now did in my two volumes: 'Thinking in the 19th Century' which is dedicated to Haeckel, and the little publication, 'Haeckel and his Opponents'.

At present, German spiritual life really exists only in Haeckel's phylogeny; philosophy is in a state of hopeless unproductiveness, theology is a web of hypocrisy which is not aware in the slightest of its dishonesty, and the sciences have fallen into the most barren philosophical ignorance in spite of great empirical progress.⁸⁰

These paragraphs are essential for understanding Steiner's view of Haeckel. Haeckel's phylogenetic concept is extraordinarily valuable, but Haeckel himself is the worst advocate for this concept.⁸¹ Further, the quote "culture is not served by exposing Haeckel's weaknesses to his contemporaries" is essential in understanding Steiner's failure to criticize the more ridiculous aspects of Haeckel's Monist philosophy. This failure to criticize has led more than one thinker to conclude that Steiner was in full agreement with these more ridiculous aspects. However, a more careful reading of Steiner's actual "praise" will show how narrowly directed it actually is.

⁸⁰ Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner. Correspondence and Documents: 1901-1925. New York: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1988. Page 13.

⁸¹ This position Steiner reiterated in a letter to Marie von Sivers:

"Haeckel contains things which must be thrown away as a cultural afterbirth. His positive side is like an embryo which is wrapped in the materialistic womb of the 19th century. But I see Haeckel's positive aspects as something which can develop. There are two forms of thinking in our time; on the one hand the developing, embryonic one: Haeckel in zoology; Schiller-Goethe must fertilize this form. ..."

Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner. Correspondence and Documents: 1901-1925. New York: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1988. Page 60.

I cannot speak of Lyell or Darwin without thinking of Haeckel. All three belong together. What Lyell and Darwin began, Haeckel took further. He expanded it in full consciousness, to serve not only the scientific needs but also the religious consciousness of mankind. He is the most modern spirit, because his Weltanschauung (view of the world) does not cling to any of the old prejudices, such as was still the case, for example, with Darwin. He is the most modern thinker, because he sees the natural as the only realm for thinking, and he is the most modern in sensibility, because he wants to know life as organized in accordance with the natural. ... When Haeckel talks with us about the processes of Nature, every word has a secondary meaning for us that is related with our feeling. He sits at the rudder, and steers powerfully. Even when many of the places towards which he steers us are ones we would rather not go past; still, he has the direction in which we want to go. From Lyell and Darwin's hands he took the handle of the rudder, and they could have given it to no one better. He will pass it on to others that will travel in his direction. And our community sails rapidly forwards, leaving behind the helpless ferrymen of the old Weltanschauungs.⁸²

Haeckel is praised for being a modern thinker – for the processes of his thought and for his general direction, and not for any specific results. Steiner also speaks of the feeling that Haeckel's contemporaries (and Steiner includes himself) have about Haeckel's work. And Steiner states that Haeckel's general direction is correct, even as he registers his metaphorical reservations to some of Haeckel's specific conclusions.

Besides the Law of Recapitulation, Steiner valued Haeckel's actual courage to think beyond the narrow confines of his specialty and grapple with the deeper questions of existence. Whether Haeckel's results were correct or not was immaterial to Steiner; the effort was rare and deserved praise.

Then for the first time I saw in Haeckel the person who placed himself courageously at the thinker's point of view in natural science, while all other researchers excluded thought and admitted only the results of sense-observation. The fact that Haeckel placed value upon creative thought in laying the foundation for reality drew me again and again to him.⁸³

Haeckel dared to use creative thought, and even if the results of this thought ended up being philosophical dilettantism or worse, Steiner admired the attempt. And Steiner was quite clear on how he disagreed with Haeckel:

I believe [Haeckel] never knew what the philosophers wished from him. This was my impression from a conversation I had with him in Leipzig after the appearance of his *Riddle of the Universe*, ... He then said: "People say I deny the spirit. I wish they could see how materials shape themselves through their forces; then they would perceive 'spirit' in everything that happens in a retort. Everywhere there is spirit." Haeckel, in fact, knew nothing whatever of the real Spirit. The very forces of nature were for him the 'spirit,' and he could rest content with this.⁸⁴

Haeckel himself thought his philosophical work was an Idealistic Monism and not a Materialistic Monism, but this, felt Steiner, was a misunderstanding on Haeckel's part concerning the true nature of philosophical Idealism.

⁸² Rudolf Steiner. *Methodische Grundlagen der Anthroposophie*. Dornach: Verlag der Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1961. Page 364. (GA 30 – Translation by Daniel Hinds)

⁸³ Rudolf Steiner. *The Course of My Life*. Chapter 30

⁸⁴ Rudolf Steiner. *The Course of My Life*. Chapter 30.

Steiner also valued Haeckel's specifically scientific work, including Haeckel's morphology. Two quotes from among many will illustrate this. In a 1916 lecture Steiner said:

Here I should like to state emphatically that I cherish the same high respect today for Haeckel's magnificent scientific achievements within the cosmic scheme, proper to natural science, as I did years ago. I still believe and always have believed that a correct appreciation of Haeckel's achievements is the best means of transcending a certain one-sidedness in his views. It is entirely intelligible that he could not attain to this insight himself.⁸⁵

This reiterates a continual theme in Steiner's work. In 1908 he said essentially the same thing in another lecture:

Haeckel does not err when explaining by the laws of materialistic morphology phenomena of which he has exceptional knowledge; if he had confined himself to a certain category of phenomena he could have performed an enormous service to humanity.⁸⁶

And Steiner recommended studying Haeckel as an exercise and prerequisite for seeking spiritual vision:

If you are touched by the Rosicrucian principle as here intended, study the system of Haeckel, with all its materialism; study it, and at the same time permeate yourselves with the methods of cognition indicated in Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment. Take what you learn in Haeckel's Anthropogenesis: on the Ancestors of Man. In that form it may very likely repel you. Learn it nevertheless; learn all that can be learned about it by outer Natural Science, and carry it towards the Gods; then you will get what is related about evolution in my Occult Science.⁸⁷

So Steiner valued Haeckel's work in a number of contexts, and Haeckel's efforts in general, but by no means subscribed to all of Haeckel's views.

All of the quotes so far have been from Steiner's anthroposophical period. Did Steiner always think of Haeckel this way, or was he once completely under the sway of Haeckel's philosophy as has been alleged by some critics attempting to paint Steiner as inconsistent?

Why did Steiner dedicate a book to Haeckel?

Just two years before stepping forward as an initiate, Rudolf Steiner completed a systematic survey of philosophical thought in the nineteenth century and dedicated it to, of all people, Ernst Haeckel. Haeckel himself a just finished his book and considered himself a philosopher as well as a scientist. Later as he published books such as Theosophy, Rudolf Steiner found himself in the position of having to defend this dedication, as it was considered inconsistent with anthroposophy as Steiner was attempting to unfold it. In the preface to his book An Outline Of Esoteric Science Rudolf Steiner noted:

A reader of the author's earlier writings — for example his work on nineteenth century philosophies or his short essay on Haeckel and his Opponents — might well be saying: 'How can one and the same man be the author of these works and of the book *Theosophy* (published in 1904) or of the present volume? How can he take up the cudgels for Haeckel and then offend so grossly against the straightforward monism, the philosophic outcome of Haeckel's researches? One could well understand the writer of this Occult Science attacking all that Haeckel stood for; that he defended him and even dedicated to him one of his main works appears preposterously inconsistent. Haeckel would have declined the dedication in no uncertain terms, had he known that the same

⁸⁵ Steiner, Rudolf. Human Life in the Light of Spiritual Science. Liestal, October 16, 1916. GA 35

⁸⁶ Steiner, Rudolf. Macrocosm and Microcosm. London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1968. Pages 150-165. Lecture 9, of March 29th, 1910.

⁸⁷ GA233a Lecture: 13th January, 1924

author would one day produce the unwieldy dualism of the present work.' Yet in the author's view one can appreciate Haeckel without having to stigmatize as nonsense whatever is not the direct outcome of his range of thought and his assumptions. We do justice to Haeckel by entering into the spirit of his scientific work, not by attacking him — as has been done — with every weapon that comes to hand. Least of all does the author hold any brief for those of Haeckel's adversaries against whom he defended the great naturalist in his essay on Haeckel and his Opponents. If then he goes beyond Haeckel's assumptions and placed the spiritual view side by side with Haeckel's purely naturalistic view of the Universe, this surely does not rank him with Haeckel's opponents. Anyone who takes sufficient trouble will perceive that there is no insuperable contradiction between the author's present work and his former writings.⁸⁸

And so Steiner himself states the essence of the argument: it is possible to appreciate Haeckel without agreeing with him, and it is possible to disagree with Haeckel without agreeing with all the others who disagree with him. 100 years later the exact same objections are still being raised to Steiner's work in relationship to Ernst Haeckel.

Steiner dedicated a book to Haeckel because he appreciated Haeckel's efforts and found some very useful aspects in them. He was not then, nor was he ever, in complete agreement with everything Haeckel said. That this fact continues to be ignored by so many critics of anthroposophy speaks either to their ignorance of Steiner and his work or to a deliberate distortion thereof.

Turning back to Staudenmaier, we read, "...from [Haeckel] anthroposophy inherited its environmentalist predilections, its hierarchical model of human development...". Staudenmaier apparently feels Steiner incapable of original thought, his role limited to propagating the worst excesses of whomever the anti-fascists have been able to link to National Socialism.

Paragraph 26:

Haeckel's elitist worldview extended beyond the realm of biology. He was also "a prophet of the national and racial regeneration of Germany" and exponent of an "intensely mystical and romantic nationalism," as well as "a direct ancestor" of Nazi eugenics.^{PS12} Monism, which Steiner for a time vigorously defended, rejected "Western rationalism, humanism, and cosmopolitanism," and was "opposed to any fundamental social change. What was needed for Germany, it argued categorically, was a far-reaching cultural and not a social revolution."^{PS13} This attitude was to become a hallmark of anthroposophy.

Haeckel's life and the influence of his worldview have been extensively written on. While there is little to disagree with in Staudenmaier's presentation of Haeckel, it has been demonstrated that Steiner broke with Haeckel on numerous points, and particularly on those that Staudenmaier deplors. As a result it is not possible to tar Steiner with Haeckel's excesses.

Paragraph 27:

In the heady turn-of-the-century atmosphere, Steiner flirted for a while with left politics, and even shared a podium with revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg at a workers' meeting in 1902. But Steiner consistently rejected any materialist or social analysis of capitalist society in favor of "looking into the soul" of fellow humans to divine the roots of the modern malaise. This facile approach to social reality was to reach fruition in his mature political vision, elaborated during the first world war. Steiner's response to the war was determined by the final, decisive component in his intellectual temperament: chauvinist nationalism.

⁸⁸ Preface to Theosophy

Let us contrast Staudenmaier's description of Steiner's "flirtation" with left politics with a description by Henry Barnes:

During these years Steiner was asked to give courses in history and public speaking at the Berlin Worker's School (*Arbeiterbildungsschule*), founded by Karl Liebknecht in 1891. Steiner's view of history directly contradicted the Marxist view that dominated the Worker's School. To Marx, economic and material forces were the only realities involved in shaping the historical process. Cultural ideals, as expressed through intellectual life, art, and religion were only froth on the surface of historical reality. They were, in his view, unrealistic ideologies – merely bourgeois self-indulgences. Steiner made it clear to the school's executive committee that he had to lecture and teach entirely in accordance with his own views. The committee made no objection to this, and Steiner began an activity that gave him great satisfaction. In many of his pupils – mostly working men and women of mature years – he experienced a yearning for knowledge and an untapped vigor of soul that lived beneath the surface of their social-democratic, Marxist indoctrination.

That his teaching was very welcome is shown by the students' request that, in addition to his history and public speaking courses, he speak to them about the sciences as well. Steiner was eventually speaking to groups within and outside the school every night of the week.⁸⁹

Steiner did not "flirt" with left-wing politics. Steiner held courses in an institution for the education of the proletariat, having first informed the directors that he opposed the Marxist interpretation of history. They hired him anyway, and he was the single most popular lecturer. He taught there for almost five years before being forced out by more doctrinaire functionaries. It was in this context that Steiner "shared a podium" – in the literal, and not ideological, sense – with Rosa Luxemburg in 1902.⁹⁰ The ridiculous "looking into the soul" quote is not cited, so the context cannot be examined.

To Mr. Staudenmaier, because Steiner rejected Marxism he must have been a right-winger, since being apolitical is impossible (a classical Marxist stance). Thus Staudenmaier invents a political affiliation for Steiner that Steiner would have flatly rejected: right wing reactionary. This rather facile approach to biography is only possible to a writer unfamiliar with the source material.

To talk of a "mature" political vision presumes some form of gradual ripening. While Staudenmaier weaves a compelling tapestry depicting Steiner's maturation from racist through reactionary to nationalist bigot, it bears no resemblance whatsoever to Steiner's actual biography.

Paragraph 28:

Steiner was by his own account "enthusiastically active" in pan-German nationalist movements in Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century.^{PS14} He saw world war one as part of an international "conspiracy against German spiritual life."^{PS15} In Steiner's preferred explanation, it wasn't imperialist rivalry among colonial powers or fanatical nationalism or unbounded militarism or the competition for markets which caused the war, but British freemasons and their striving for world domination. Steiner was a personal acquaintance of General Helmuth von Moltke, chief of staff of the German high command; after Moltke's death in 1916 Steiner claimed to be in contact with his spirit and channeled the general's views on the war from the nether world. After the war

⁸⁹ Barnes, Henry. A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1997. Pages 70-72.

⁹⁰ Lindenberg, Christoph. Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistes Leben, 1997 pages 300-305.

Steiner had high praise for "German militarism" (his own term), and continued to rail against France, French culture, and the French language in rhetoric which matched that of Mein Kampf. In the 1990's anthroposophists were still defending Steiner's jingoist nonsense, insisting that Germany bore no responsibility for world war one and was a victim of the "West."

The above paragraph, should it prove true, would indeed paint a terrible picture of this Rudolf Steiner. But is it factually accurate? First, the quote "enthusiastically active" is based on a faulty translation. In the original, a paragraph in Steiner's autobiography, Steiner states, "At that time I took a lively interest in the battles that the Germans in Austria were fighting concerning their national existence."⁹¹ As I described in the footnote, Staudenmaier has mistranslated "lively interest" as "enthusiastically active". This is no minor point, and indicative of the type of writing that Staudenmaier is engaged in.

Steiner's views on the origins of the First World War are complex, but flatly contrary to Staudenmaier's claims included an acknowledgement of the imperialistic rivalry among the European powers, the unhealthy influence of fanatical nationalism – something Steiner opposed throughout his life – and unbounded militarism. Steiner also mentioned British Freemasons, but the influence Steiner attributes to them, while not insignificant, is also not decisive. I refer the interested reader to chapter 35 of Christoph Lindenberg's biography,⁹² or Steiner's own statements on the subject, given among other places in a series of lectures titled "The Karma of Untruthfulness", a title that concisely summarizes Steiner's view of the ultimate cause of the conflagration.⁹³ Steiner lived through the war and spoke and wrote extensively on the subject.

For Steiner's alleged high praise for "German militarism," which we are told by the quotes in the text are Steiner's own words, I was not able to find any evidence among the 90,000 pages of Steiner's complete works, or among any other primary sources. Where Staudenmaier might have picked this up remains unknown, since he did not cite his sources. In actual fact Steiner spoke out against militarism throughout the entire war, to audiences of all nationalities.

⁹¹ The German reads: "Nun nahm ich damals an den nationalen Kämpfen lebhaften Anteil, welche die Deutschen in Österreich um ihre nationale Existenz führten." (Steiner, *Mein Lebensgang*, Dornach 1925, p. 132) The phrase "Anteil... nehmen... an" - the phrase used in the sentence - is translated as "take an interest in;" or, if indicating sympathy, "sympathize with" (Langenscheidts Handwörterbuch Deutsch-Englisch, Berlin 1996, p. 807). Further, "lebhaft" as an adjective is translated "lively" when indicating interest or imagination (same dictionary, p. 1136) and I should note that by no definition given does it mean "deeply" or "enthusiastically," though both these would seem reasonable to a translator trying to improve the flow. So "enthusiastically active in" is widely off the mark, "deeply sympathetic" is also off the mark (individually each word could go that way, but together in the context of the sentence a far better alternative exists) and the straight dictionary translation would be: "**At that time I took a lively interest in the battles that the Germans in Austria were fighting concerning their national existence.**" The verb in the sentence ("führten") refers strictly to the Germans, and Steiner's position was limited to his "lively interest" in the form of a prepositional phrase.

I should note that the phrase has been mistranslated in the 1978 English edition of Steiner's autobiography.

⁹² Lindenberg, Christoph. *Rudolf Steiner: Eine Biographie*. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistes Leben, 1997 pages 572-587.

⁹³ To Steiner, nationalism and militarism were symptoms of an underlying materialistic trend that he felt was largely responsible for the course of the war. Steiner's relationship with the von Moltkes is well documented, and I refer the interested reader to the excellent book [Light For The New Millennium: Rudolf Steiner's Association With Helmuth And Eliza von Moltke](#) edited by T. H. Meyer.

For Staudenmaier to make the historical judgment that Steiner railed against France with "rhetoric which matched that of Mein Kampf" would imply that he had read a sufficient amount of Steiner and Mein Kampf as to be able to compare the two. Had Staudenmaier done this, he would perhaps notice that Steiner did not, in actual fact, rail against the French as is here claimed. The absence of any footnote indicating the source for this absurd statement is a fairly decent indication that Staudenmaier has read very little of Steiner's own work. Indeed, we are not even told the secondary source from which Staudenmaier might have borrowed this comparison. This fascist anti-French bigot is the same Rudolf Steiner who in 1919 chose French and English as the foreign languages to be taught in the first Waldorf School, and when asked why in 1924 explained:

"We have introduced French and English into the Waldorf School, because with French there is much to be learned from the inner quality of the language not found elsewhere, namely, a certain feeling for rhetoric, which it is very good to acquire; and English is taught because it is a universal world language, and will become so more and more."⁹⁴

Finally we are told, again without citations, that unnamed anthroposophists in the 1990's insist that Germany bears no responsibility for World War One, and it is implied, though not directly claimed, that they do this because Steiner said so. As is distressingly common in this piece, the footnotes for this section do not substantiate any of the claims (for example, none of them talk about the views of anthroposophists in the 1990's).

Most of the paragraph is unsubstantiated misrepresentation woven into a largely fictional narrative. The first quote is blatantly mistranslated.

Paragraph 29:

In the midst of the war's senseless savagery, Steiner used his military and industrial connections to try to persuade German and Austrian elites of a new social theory of his, which he hoped to see imposed on conquered territories in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately for Steiner's plans, Germany and Austria-Hungary lost the war, and his dream went unrealized. But the new doctrine he had begun preaching serves to this day as the social vision of anthroposophy. Conceived as an alternative to both Woodrow Wilson's self-determination program and the bolshevik revolution, Steiner gave this theory the unwieldy name "the tripartite structuring of the social organism" (Dreigliederung des sozialen Organismus, often referred to in English-language anthroposophist literature as "the threefold commonwealth", a phrase which obscures Steiner's biologicistic view of the social realm as an actual organism).^{PS16} The three branches of this scheme, which resembles Mussolini's corporatist model, are the state (political, military, and police functions), the economy, and the cultural sphere. This last sphere encompasses "all judicial, educational, intellectual and spiritual matters," which are to be administered by "corporations," with individuals free to choose their school, church, court, etc.^{PS17}

So now we turn to Steiner's proposal for a Threefold Social Order. As is distressingly typical in this article, both the idea itself and the history surrounding it are factually incorrect. At this point this is not at all surprising, seeing as to how all four "Steiner" quotes are individual words taken from secondary sources. Staudenmaier, it seems, has never attempted to understand Steiner's Threefold Social Order as Steiner explained it. Instead he has formed his opinion from four openly hostile secondary sources. It should thus surprise no one that his grasp of it is faulty.

To correct a few very mistaken statements; first, the Threefold Social Order was intended to be implemented in Austro-Hungary and/or Germany. It was not dreamed up as something to be imposed on the "conquered territories in Eastern Europe." I personally find this particular

⁹⁴ Rudolf Steiner. The Kingdom of Childhood. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1995. Page139. It is in answer to the last question in the question and answer section of the lecture of August 20th, 1924.

distortion to be a disgusting perversion of historical facts, especially for the implications.⁹⁵ Second, it arose from questions that were brought to him, and not from his own initiative. It was first offered at a time when Germany was clearly already losing, and most of Steiner's popular efforts to see it implemented were after the wars end, so the phrase "unfortunately for Steiner's plans, Germany and Austria-Hungary lost the war" is entirely mistaken; the perverse conclusion of an egregious distortion. As to Steiner's motives, I find it hard to trust the judgment of a "historian" who can't even understand the basic idea in the first place. Staudenmaier would have us believe that it was conceived to avoid the partition of the Hapsburg Empire and to prevent a Bolshevik revolution. Even if that were correct, it hardly seems an ignoble goal. The Bolshevik revolution cost some 60 million lives in Eastern Europe, and one can only imagine the toll had central Europe also undergone a similar process of forced collectivization. As an alternative, one can also imagine a democratic Austro-Hungarian state thriving in central Europe, first as a counter-pole to Prussian-influenced Germany, and possibly even averting the many deaths that resulted from the transition to Communism throughout the region about 30 years later. Steiner's primary goal, stated frequently, was to reform the social sphere, and not save the old order.

Let us look first at the origin of the concept behind the Threefold Social Order:

Europe is in flames. The First World War has entered its final phase. It is May 1917. Otto von Lerchenfeld, a German diplomat in Berlin, was searching for ideas that might offer a basis for genuine peace once the war finally ended. He decided to turn to the once person whom he believed might have insights that could penetrate to the sources of the social sickness that underlay the war. The person to whom he turned was Rudolf Steiner, whose work he knew. Von Lerchenfeld made an appointment and poured out the despair in his heart, speaking of his realization that Germany and Middle Europe had allowed themselves to be driven into a dead end. Steiner listened intently, asked a few questions, and invited him to return the next day. The result was that these two men worked together daily for more than three weeks to hammer out two memoranda in which Rudolf Steiner presented the ideas that he believed could serve as a foundation for peace.

Von Lerchenfeld circulated the memoranda in the highest echelons of the German government. Somewhat later, through the interest of a mutual friend whose brother was then the cabinet chief of the old Austrian Emperor, the memoranda reached a few officials in the government of Austria-Hungary.⁹⁶

This memorandum suggested that Central Europe offer peace on the basis of a social order based on the freedom of the individual, and that all social forms be freed from state control, establishing a free cultural life, truly a revolutionary idea for the time and place (though not unknown in the United States).⁹⁷ How Staudenmaier turns a proposal for peace based a

Inasmuch as Staudenmaier has quoted Steiner (from a secondary source) he has not distorted the original. That is, he has grasped the barest essentials of the concept of a three-part division of social life. The facile comparison to Mussolini is particularly superficial. Steiner's entire position is fundamentally antithetical to fascism, as fascists ideologues themselves have determined.

⁹⁵ Steiner wished to reform social, economic and political life within Austria and Germany, and after failing to interest sufficient government officials, attempted to do so from the ground up through popular consensus. Steiner did not attempt to foist some reactionary scheme on enslaved people. How Staudenmaier manages to come to this conception is simply incomprehensible to me. Steiner's efforts are well documented in over a dozen volumes of primary source material, and there are dozens of additional books and commentary that have been written on the subject over the past 80 years.

⁹⁶ Barnes, Henry. A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1997. Page 9.

⁹⁷ See Christoph Lindenberg. Rudolf Steiner: Eine Chronik. Stuttgart: 1988. Pages 614-620 for the full account.

federalist system of autonomous social and cultural units and individual freedom into a dangerous theory to be imposed upon a conquered territory is simply incomprehensible.

Steiner's thoughts had been directed to the questions of how to best form a social order by this question and the discussions with von Lerchenfeld, and he took up the theme in his lectures. By the end of 1918 he was speaking of the need for social renewal quite frequently. With the collapse of the social order in Germany in late 1918 he increased the intensity of his lecturing. In April 1919 his book *Die Kernpunkt der sozialen Frage* (The Crux of the Social Question) was published.

I share Staudenmaier's concern that "the threefold commonwealth" is not a good translation of "*Dreigliederung des sozialen Organismus*." The most strictly accurate translation would be "The Tripartite Division of the Social Organism," but since that is a rather unwieldy translation the one currently used is "Threefold Social Order." "Commonwealth" was a choice of the British translators of the 1920's and is no longer used, either in the current translations or in conversation or writing among current-day anthroposophists. Only a very few old books even refer to the "Threefold Commonwealth", so by claiming that this phrase is common currency among anthroposophists Staudenmaier shows just how unfamiliar he is with the entire field of discourse on the subject.

Calling human society an *organism* is hardly *biologistic* (defined as: using biological principles in explaining human especially social behavior). Biologism refers to individual behavior; the social organism refers to the behavior of a group or groups. Staudenmaier is throwing the word in for its association to "deterministic," trying to subtly imply that Steiner's idea for social organization is a form of biological determinism. Such use of word-associations is a classic propagandist maneuver. However, Steiner is claiming that certain forms are naturally better suited to group interactions than others, based on his insights into group dynamics, and not on individual biological traits.

A superficial comparison to Mussolini furthers the association with fascism; however, Steiner's presentation predates Mussolini by 20 years and bears only superficial resemblances. But to Staudenmaier a superficial similarity is always a major point if it serves to put Steiner in a negative light. In the sentence-and-a-half that actually describes Steiner's proposed social order it becomes clear that the idea itself is hardly earth shattering.

Regarding Steiner's relationship to fascism two points should be mentioned. The first is the attack by Adolf Hitler on Steiner and Steiner's Threefold Social Order in 1921. Steiner's proposed social reforms were decried as "one of the many completely Jewish methods of destroying the peoples' normal state of mind"⁹⁸ Hitler had a number of reasons for disliking Steiner. Steiner's Threefold Social Order was a real alternative at the time, and as such was a threat to Hitler's "national" socialism. Indeed every aspect of Steiner' philosophy is antithetical to Nazi fascism. This is evident in the second point:

"Which social forms can be the only acceptable ones if all social development is tending towards individualization? The answer cannot be too difficult. Any state or society that regards itself as an end in itself has to aim for control over the individual, regardless of the way in which such control is exercised, whether it be an absolutist, constitutional or republican manner. As long as the state no longer regards itself as an end in itself, but as a means towards an end, the principle of state control will no longer be emphasized. All arrangements will be made in such a way that the individual receives the greatest

⁹⁸ Hitler, Adolf. *Völkische Beobachter*. 15 Mar 1921.

scope. The greatest ideal of the state will not be the control of anything. It will be a community that wants nothing for itself, everything for the individual."⁹⁹

This is Steiner writing in 1898, 35 years before Hitler took power in Germany. Contrast this with the basic description of fascism from the Encyclopedia Britannica:

"... fascism extolled the supreme sovereignty of the nation as an absolute. It demanded the revival of the spirit of the ancient *polis* (city-state), above all of Sparta with its discipline and total devotion to duty, and of the complete coordination of all intellectual and political thought and activities against modern individualism and scientific skepticism."¹⁰⁰

Steiner flatly rejected the very premise of fascism. Little wonder the Anthroposophical Society in Germany was banned shortly after the Nazi's seized power.

Paragraph 30:

Anthroposophists consider this threefold structure to be "naturally ordained."^{PS18} Its central axiom is that the modern integration of politics, economy and culture into an ostensibly democratic framework must falter because, according to Steiner, neither the economy nor cultural life can or should be structured democratically. The cultural sphere, which Steiner defined very broadly, is a realm of individual achievement where the most talented and capable should predominate. And the economy must never be subject to democratic public control because it would then collapse. Steiner's economic and political naiveté are encapsulated in his claim that capitalism "will become a legitimate capitalism if it is spiritualized."^{PS19}

Steiner conceived of the Threefold Social Order out of the questions that were put to him, and from a sense for what could serve as a fair and free basis for human society. Flatly counter to Staudenmaier's claim, Steiner did not predict the failure of democracy. Had he done this it would place him in the company of any number of political reactionaries – among them the early Nazis. This is clearly Staudenmaier's intention. But Steiner clearly, unequivocally and repeatedly called for individual equality to be the basis of any political system. Steiner also called for political - that is democratic - control of the economy as a whole. That is, Steiner considered the details of working conditions, contracts between workers and employers, hours worked and so forth to be political decisions, decisions to be reached in the political sphere on the basis of equality and then dictated to businesses. Firms would have to accept political decisions about working conditions in the same way that today US businesses have to accept minimum wage and overtime laws. Steiner's analogy was that politically-imposed working conditions in his Threefold Social Order would have to be taken as a given in the same way that the length of the growing season or the availability of raw materials in a region is factored as a given. At the same time Steiner predicted that if all business decisions were subject to a majority vote of all workers, such a business would fail. Steiner felt that meritocracy was the most efficient way to run a business, while emphasizing the need for fair working conditions and equitable compensation. By moving the word order around, Staudenmaier has misrepresented Steiner and painted him a heartless radical libertarian and anti-socialist, positions distant from Steiner's own views.

Staudenmaier's point in this paragraph is actually quite illogical. Steiner is claiming that with greater concern for individual well-being, capitalism can be improved. This is the same fundamental assumption that underlies all current western capitalist societies. It is the philosophical basis for any and all regulation of business by government. Yet in articulating this belief Steiner is supposedly demonstrating political naiveté. This simply does not follow.

⁹⁹ Steiner, Rudolf. *Social and Political Science*. Ed. Stephen Usher. Forest Row, UK: Sophia Books, 2003. Pages 32-33.

¹⁰⁰ Kohn, Hans. "Fascism". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2002 ed. CD-ROM. New York: Britannica, 2002.

Steiner's astute views on politics, economics, and culture are nothing like those attributed to him by Staudenmaier.

Paragraphs 31 and 32:

In the aftermath of the bloody world war, at the very moment of the greatest upheavals in history against the violence, misery, and exploitation of capitalism, Steiner emerged as an ardent defender of private profit, the concentration of property and wealth, and the unfettered market. Arguing vehemently against any effort to replace anti-social institutions with humane ones, Steiner proposed adapting his "threefold commonwealth" to the existing system of class domination. He could scarcely deny that the coarse economic despotism of his day was enormously damaging to human lives, but insisted that "private capitalism as such is not the cause of the damage":

"The fact that individual people or groups of people administer huge masses of capital is not what makes life anti-social, but rather the fact that these people or groups exploit the products of their administrative labor in an anti-social manner. [. . .] If management by capable individuals were replaced with management by the whole community, the productivity of management would be undermined. Free initiative, individual capabilities and willingness to work can not be fully realized within such a community. [. . .] The attempt to structure economic life in a social manner destroys productivity."^{PS20}

It is interesting to note that in any lengthier quote, no matter how chopped up, Steiner appears far more reasonable than in three-word mini-quotes carefully manipulated for maximum impact. In the above paragraph we hear an indignant Marxist decry Steiner's understanding that economics works best on the basis of capitalism. Yet Staudenmaier fundamentally mischaracterizes Steiner's vision of capitalism. For Steiner it was most important that capitalism be humanized; he was explicitly against the unfettered market. Nowhere did Steiner propose adapting his Threefold Social Order to the then-current class system. He proposed a humanized society whose economy was to be run on the basis of capitalism, but restrained by an independent political system. Nor was his proposal specific to any one country; it had enthusiastic supporters in Great Britain, Holland and Scandinavia. This is not to imply that these countries would then suddenly merge into one. The idea of the Threefold Social Order is adaptable to any society large enough to be a country.

Paragraph 33:

Though Steiner tried to make inroads within working class institutions, his outlook was understandably not very popular among workers. The revolutionaries of the 1919 Munich council republic derided him as "the witch doctor of decaying capitalism."^{PS21} Industrialists, on the other hand, showed a keen interest in Steiner's notions. Soon after the revolutionary upsurge of workers across Germany was crushed, Steiner was invited by the director of the Waldorf-Astoria tobacco factory to establish a company school in Stuttgart. Thus were Waldorf schools born.

"Industrialists" is perhaps technically accurate; there were, after all, two of them involved. Both had been involved with anthroposophy for over a decade. One was Emil Molt, the other Carl Unger. Both were longtime personal students of Steiner's, and both enthusiastically embraced the Threefold Social Order. They were both industrialists in that they owned factories that employed workers numbering in the low hundreds, Molt making cigarettes, and Unger making machinists tool dies. It is misleading to imply that Steiner's Threefold Social Order attracted widespread interest among the malefactors of great wealth. For better or worse, those most interested tended to be those already familiar with Steiner's work. This, more than any other factor explains why the Threefold Social Order did not succeed on a large scale.

That the Munich communists denounced Steiner is hardly surprising; communism has an extraordinarily fractious history and denouncing each other and the world at large is something

of an art form in those circles. Steiner was certainly no communist, and openly hostile to the Bolsheviks, so the fact that he earned their distain is to be expected.

It is indeed a pity that the basic facts ruin the otherwise smooth flow of polemic. It is a nice picture to imagine a cabal of industrialists huddling around Steiner while the proletariat spit on the group of them. Steiner's idea was taken very seriously in the broader society for a short time. Working-class audiences by the thousands turned out to hear him speak, and his book was reviewed in a generally favorable light as far away as the Times of London and the New York Times.

Staudenmaier writes, "Soon after the revolutionary upsurge of workers across Germany was crushed, Steiner was invited by the director of the Waldorf-Astoria tobacco factory to establish a company school in Stuttgart." He has the basic chronology correct, but the reasons implicit in his formulation are wrong. Molt had been working fervently to implement the entire Threefold Social Order in Württemberg. The same forces that crushed the revolutionary upsurge of workers across Germany also prevented him from realizing this goal, so he turned to a more modest endeavor, founding a school for his worker's children.

Paragraph 34:

Anthroposophy in Practice: Waldorf Schools and Biodynamic Farming

The school in Stuttgart turned out to be the anthroposophists' biggest success, along with the nearby pharmaceutical factory that they named after the mythical Norse oracle Weleda. Waldorf schools are now represented in many countries and generally project a solidly progressive image. There are undoubtedly progressive aspects to Waldorf education, many of them absorbed from the intense ferment of alternative pedagogical theories prevalent in the first decades of the twentieth century. But there is more to Waldorf schooling than holistic learning, musical expression, and eurhythmics.

Staudenmaier offers an interesting thesis, here not defended, that Waldorf schools are an amalgam of techniques "absorbed" from the general pedagogical milieu of the era. Now I am not sure by what means Staudenmaier feels himself such an expert in the history of pedagogy as to make such a sweeping generalization. To speak in authoritative generalizations without any sort of substantiation seems a typical gesture of Staudenmaier's towards anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner. Once again Staudenmaier gets the essential points wrong.

It is true that Waldorf pedagogy has proven itself to be on the forefront of progressive trends over the last century. But this is not, as Staudenmaier supposes, because Steiner picked and selected from among the best trends of his day. Rather, Steiner founded a pedagogy based entirely on what he felt was best for the education of children – often with quite detailed explanations – and these same general trends subsequently and quite independently entered into the general "progressive" stream of education in bits and pieces. It is not uncommon for ideas to enter the world simultaneously and independently (for example, the gasoline engine) and this appears to be the case with many of the techniques of Waldorf that are now common among "progressive" education. So the causality Staudenmaier offers is false: trends in progressive education did not "create" Waldorf in Steiner's mind. Indeed, in most cases where there is a demonstrable link the direction is the reverse: progressive education borrows from Waldorf.

Paragraph 35:

Classical anthroposophy, with its root races and its national souls, is the "covert curriculum" of Waldorf schools.^{PS22} Anthroposophists themselves avow in internal forums that the idea of karma and reincarnation is the "basis of all true education."^{PS23} They believe that each class of students chooses one another and their teacher before birth. Steiner himself demanded that Waldorf

schools be staffed by "teachers with a knowledge of man originating in a spiritual world."^{PS24}
Later anthroposophists express the Waldorf vision thus:

"This education is essentially grounded on the recognition of the child as a spiritual being, with a varying number of incarnations behind him, who is returning at birth into the physical world, into a body that will be slowly moulded into a usable instrument by the soul-spiritual forces he brings with him. He has chosen his parents for himself because of what they can provide for him that he needs in order to fulfill his karma, and, conversely, they too need their relationship with him in order to fulfill their own karma."^{PS25}

Staudenmaier's fumbling to formulate statements concerning things about which he knows very little becomes evident in phrases like "classical anthroposophy". There is no "neo-anthroposophy" or anything similar to stand in contradistinction to "classical" anthroposophy. Staudenmaier has coined the phrase to appear knowledgeable, but it is meaningless, as is most of his argument here. While he is directly claiming that 'root races' and 'national souls' are taught secretly in the Waldorf school, the claim is utter nonsense, firstly because nobody in anthroposophy talks about 'root races',¹⁰¹ second because 'national souls' do not exist,¹⁰² third because anthroposophy as such is explicitly withheld from the curriculum on Steiner's insistence, and fourth because few Waldorf schools have even a majority of teachers who are actual anthroposophists. Anthroposophy does serve as a source of inspiration to many Waldorf teachers.¹⁰³ This fact is, of course, quite explicit in the brochures of almost every Waldorf School on five continents, so Staudenmaier can hardly claim credit for "discovering" this startling fact. But his claims go way beyond this: Staudenmaier claims that anthroposophy itself is a hidden subject in the curriculum. For support of this claim he cites two works, one by a German ex-Waldorf teacher openly hostile to the schools she formerly worked in, and another by a German left-wing radical journalist with a stated goal of destroying the European Waldorf school movement; neither are known for their scholarly depth. What Staudenmaier has not done is read any actual primary source material on Waldorf education, pedagogy, or curriculum, or interviewed anyone actively involved in the field. The result is about as accurate as a description of Judaism written by a polemical 19th Century anti-Semite.

¹⁰¹ What in Blavatsky's Theosophy were known as 'root races' are known in Anthroposophy as 'epochs'. Steiner felt that the term 'root race' was incorrect to emphasize racial aspect of the progression of time and civilizations, and that cultural development was of primary significance. So he explicitly rejected the term, and replaced it with "epoch" (the related term 'sub-race' he renamed "cultural epoch"). This happened in 1906, in the fourth year of 25 years of lecturing on esoteric subjects. The old term 'root race' appears only in a few of Steiner's very early Theosophical writings, and is simply not used at all among anthroposophists. Indeed, it has never been used among anthroposophists, as anthroposophists only broke from Theosophy in 1913, seven years after Steiner stopped using the term. I have written an article on the subject, online at <http://www.defendingsteiner.com/misconceptions/r-race.php>

¹⁰² The term in German is "*Volksseele*" or "Folk Soul", and not "National Soul". A Folk Soul is a designation to represent the essence of the culture of a people. In one form, the concept goes back to the German romantic philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), though Herder wrote of a "*Volksgeist*", or Folk Spirit, and differed from Steiner in a number of important ways. Staudenmaier might consider consulting the excellent description of Herder's conception of a *Volksgeist* in George Mosse's book *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, which he cited earlier. Herder and the idea of the *Volksgeist* are discussed on pages 34-36. Staudenmaier's constant confusion of culture and nation allows him to emphasize a nationalism in Steiner and anthroposophy that simply does not exist.

¹⁰³ In any group of Waldorf teachers you will find a large range of opinions and attitudes towards Steiner and anthroposophy. Some merely find it interesting, other embrace it completely in the spirit intended, and a few others perhaps too dogmatically. There are even those who find the whole thing stupid, yet like the way the schools are run, and for that reason choose to work there. In any group of Waldorf teachers you will find a large range of opinions and attitudes towards Steiner.

For example, it would indeed strain credulity to believe that every individual child in each class in every Waldorf School chooses every other student in the class and the teacher before birth. If nothing else, such a conception provides precious little space for the agency of free will. So it will probably surprise no one besides Staudenmaier that this is not an article of faith for every teacher in every Waldorf School. Inasmuch as Waldorf teachers are students of anthroposophy (and while many are, quite a few are not) they may take into consideration that karma might play some role in the interaction they have with their students. But this consideration applies equally to all other social interactions. And precious few Waldorf teachers pretend to a degree of karmic insight sufficient to know the pre-earthly intentions of all, or any, of their students. Instead the concept of karma helps the teacher respect the individuality of each student. Given the nature of the concept of karma – that in the course of repeated earth lives we learn in order to grow – it is hardly surprising that this relates to the very principle of education. Thus it is not incorrect that to one who believes in the concept, "karma is the basis of all true education". However it is mistaken to contend as Staudenmaier and others do that this basic principle somehow translates into a rigid belief in the iron hand of fate determining classroom configurations.¹⁰⁴

Paragraph 36:

The curriculum at Waldorf schools is structured around the stages of spiritual maturation posited by anthroposophy: from one to seven years a child develops her or his physical body, from seven to fourteen years the ethereal body, and from fourteen to twenty-one the astral body. These stages are supposed to be marked by physical changes; thus kindergartners at Waldorf schools can't enter first grade until they've lost all their baby teeth.

The above paragraph displays all the subtlety and understanding of Conquistador describing the religious beliefs of the Inca. That is, a few of the details are recognizably related to some of the forms, but the whole is grossly mistaken and displays a serious lack of effort at understanding. Take for example the term "ethereal body". Staudenmaier obviously means "etheric body" but is apparently not familiar enough with even the most basic terminology to use the correct word.

Steiner called for an education based on a comprehensive understanding of the changes in development of the human being through childhood. This concept of "developmentally appropriate" education is hardly unique to Steiner. Steiner had additional perspectives on the development of the human being, and this allowed him to designate developmental stages and the appropriate pedagogical responses decades before mainstream educational theorists came to similar conclusions. Indeed, not all of the subtle developmental stages have yet shown up in non-Waldorf research (since Waldorf is so far ahead of developments in what is called "progressive" education, people in Waldorf circles often wonder when some researcher will "discover" yet another thing that has been done in Waldorf for the last 80 years). This is not to imply a contradiction between Waldorf and non-Waldorf child development theories.

¹⁰⁴ A proper understanding of the anthroposophical conception of Karma is critical for forming a basis for understanding how this does and does not effect Waldorf education. The essential point that so many critics seem to miss is the fact that karma does not equal pre-destiny. In the anthroposophical conception, karma is like a checklist of to-do items for a lifetime – a list that may be completed along with many additional adventures, or that may not have even one item completed. Because of the existence of free will and the forward-looking as well as backward-looking nature of karma, many unplanned things may happen in any life (with consequences for the future) and no one can tell what is karmic, and what is the result of free will. Thus no true anthroposophist (or Waldorf teacher) will go around claiming that this or that event or tendency is "karma". Absent clairvoyance, which very few claim for themselves, no one can tell one way or the other.

In Steiner's pedagogy there are two major events, or milestones, in childhood development. Both indicate processes that culminate at that point, and both are referred to in Staudenmaier's paragraph, though inaccurately. The first is the first dentition, or loss of the baby teeth, and the second is puberty. These two major milestones are roughly seven years apart, so that childhood and adolescence can be divided into roughly three seven-year periods. Now what these seven-year periods signify to Waldorf pedagogy is indeed important, and there is much talk of these seven-year periods in Waldorf education.

The first seven-year period, from birth to the beginning of the first dentition, is a period in which the physical body in particular is developing.¹⁰⁵ Now contrary to Staudenmaier's belief, the physical body is not the only thing developing, for the etheric and astral bodies are also developing, and a fourth element, called the ego, is also present and active. However, of all the developments, Steiner considers the development of the physical body to be the most significant. Likewise, the second seven-year period is one in which the etheric body's development has especial significance. This is not to indicate, as Staudenmaier does, that the physical body stops development, or that the astral body is inactive. Both continue to develop, but the etheric body's development is most important. The onset of puberty (which today is closer to age 12 than 14) signifies the start of a period of special development of the astral body. The etheric body and physical bodies continue to develop, as does the ego. In one poetic description, Steiner talked about a second, third and fourth "birth"; that at first dentition the etheric body was "born", at puberty the astral body was "born" and at roughly 21 the ego is "born". This is to be understood allegorically, since in Steiner's view they are all present even before the child's physical birth.

In addition, Rudolf Steiner has identified two further milestones in the development of children between the ages of 7 and 14, that is, between the 1st and 8th grade.¹⁰⁶ The first occurs around age 9 years four months, and the second around age 11 years eight months. Now it should be noted that these divisions, especially in such precision, are archetypal, that is they will almost never correspond exactly with any one particular child. In the particular child the markers of the starting and ending of the whole period in question is the age between first dentition and puberty, the actual age being of secondary importance. The first milestone comes at the end of the first third of this period, and is referred to in Waldorf circles as "the nine year change." Prior to the nine-year change, the child lives in a consciousness that encompasses the entire immediate environment, and does not distinguish between inner and outer, between self and other.¹⁰⁷ After the nine-year change, the child experiences strongly the separation of self from world. The transition is not immediate or quick, it starts even years earlier, with occasional moments of awakening, which often remain as significant memories in the child's later life, and these moments then become more frequent. After the nine year change (whether it occurs at nine years four months or much earlier or later) the process is complete, so that the separateness is now the normal state of consciousness, and the united consciousness is experienced as lost.

¹⁰⁵ The theme of seven-year periods in human development is quite common in Steiner's work, and he develops it in literally hundreds of lectures in dozens of books. A good overview can be obtained by reading Rudolf Steiner, The Child's Changing Consciousness. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1988.

¹⁰⁶ See among others, Rudolf Steiner, The Roots of Education. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1997. Page 69.

¹⁰⁷ See Rudolf Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995. Page 48, and Rudolf Steiner, The Child's Changing Consciousness. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1988 – the entire book.

In the pedagogy of the Waldorf School, this nine-year change has a number of important implications. Because the outer world is now separate, it can be observed and investigated, taken back into the inner world via the senses. This should be done in a way that maintains the integrity, the wholeness, and unity of the outer world. For example, plants should be studied in the context of soil ecology and their native ecosystem, and not as a piece of green matter of a given shape, brought in to the classroom for inspection.¹⁰⁸ This is just one of many examples of how Steiner's theoretical stages of child development are tied to practical pedagogical indications and shape the curriculum of Waldorf Schools.

In this second third, between the nine-year change and the eleven-year change, the child lives in the immediacy of outer impressions, but is not yet ready to comprehend cause and effect. If this is presented, it can be repeated back, but not yet really grasped, not really understood. This is possible only after the eleven-year change. It is then that mechanistic sciences such as physics can be introduced.¹⁰⁹ These, too, should be introduced in the context of ordinary life. Minerals are found in the earth, not just in boxes and photographs. They are found in specific geographic regions, and for specific reasons. Levers are used in ordinary life, and can be introduced with concrete examples.

Thus is the Waldorf pedagogy shaped by the characteristics of the changing consciousness of the child in its development through the school years. The exact ages may differ in individual children, but the pattern remains universal. I could go on and write an entire book on the subject, and indeed, several such books have been written. It is a pity that Mr. Staudenmaier could not avail himself to such a book before considering himself expertly informed on the subject of Waldorf education.

Paragraph 37:

Along with privileging ostensibly "spiritual" considerations over cognitive and psycho-social ones, the static uniformity of this scheme is pedagogically suspect. It also suggests that Waldorf schools' reputation for fostering a spontaneous, child-centered and individually oriented educational atmosphere is undeserved. In fact Steiner's model of instruction is downright authoritarian: he emphasized repetition and rote learning, and insisted that the teacher should be the center of the classroom and that students' role was not to judge or even discuss the teacher's pronouncements. In practice many Waldorf schools implement strict discipline, with public punishment for perceived transgressions.

In suddenly declaring Waldorf "pedagogically suspect" without ever having bothered to study it, I have to wonder where Mr. Staudenmaier gained such expertise in the field of in education. I also have to wonder what comprehensive background in pedagogy informs his expert opinion on the subject. We have already seen just how little Mr. Staudenmaier knows about Waldorf in his failure to use the proper term in discussing even the most basic aspects of the pedagogy. The fact that he finds Waldorf to value un-named "spiritual" considerations, supposedly over other, un-named "psycho-social"¹¹⁰ ones is quite curious; curious in that he has evidently not undertaken even a basic study of these "spiritual" considerations. I have to wonder how he is so sure that they are wrong if he doesn't even know what they are. Nebulous references to superior "psycho-social" considerations without any elaboration or citations strikes me as the

¹⁰⁸ Rudolf Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995. Pages 37-39.

¹⁰⁹ Rudolf Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995. Pages 51.

¹¹⁰ Ironic indeed is the fact that the odd construction "psycho-social" essentially says the same thing as "spiritual". "Psycho" is derived from the Greek "soul" so Staudenmaier is decrying Waldorf 's ostensibly "spiritual" bent over a more mainstream "soul-social" one.

work of a writer who is putting ink to paper in the effort to make a point without actually thinking first.

Mr. Staudenmaier's further conjecture, that his ten-second investigation "suggests" that everything tens of thousands of parents over eight decades know about the school that they have chosen to send their children to is completely wrong, is the height of incompetent scholarship. Waldorf's reputation has not been won on a multi-million dollar advertising campaign. Rather, Waldorf's reputation is the result of decades of results. And the Waldorf movement is not the fastest growing pedagogical movement in the world because it abuses and mis-educates children. Almost every Waldorf school in the world (over seven hundred and counting) started as a parent initiative, and grew from the enthusiasm of parents who are deeply concerned with their children's education. If Mr. Staudenmaier's allegations here were even remotely accurate there would simply be no Waldorf movement and Steiner's pedagogical indications would be a footnote in history.

On what deep investigation does Mr. Staudenmaier presume to judge Waldorf as a whole to be "statically uniform"? Just how does he come to the conclusion that Waldorf perpetrates rote learning, a practice Steiner repeatedly and vehemently rejected, on its students? The answer has already been suggested. In reading only two books by authors openly hostile to Waldorf education Staudenmaier has formed a highly inaccurate and misinformed opinion on a complex and dynamic pedagogy. That he forms such an inaccurate understanding of Waldorf education from such a poor selection or source material is not surprising. What is surprising is the incomprehensible claim that he could find no other descriptions of Waldorf pedagogy; that no "comprehensive survey" exists. If this is indicative of Mr. Staudenmaier's research abilities, it is a damning indictment indeed.

Paragraph 38:

Anthroposophy's peculiar predilections also shape the Waldorf curriculum. There are no sports at European Waldorf schools and no jazz or popular music; these phenomena are considered to harbor demonic forces. Instead students read fairy tales, a staple of Waldorf education. Taken together with the pervasive anti-technological and anti-scientific bias, the suspicion toward rational thought, and the occasional outbreaks of racist gibberish, these factors indicate that Waldorf schooling is as questionable as the other aspects of the anthroposophist enterprise.

Continuing his tirade and litany of absurd and distorted claims against Waldorf schools, Mr. Staudenmaier here presents a string of inane claims that even the simplest investigation easily disproves. For example, the statement "there are no sports at European Waldorf schools" is particularly absurd. I have walked the grounds of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, and there is a track, basketball courts, and a gym with equipment for volleyball and gymnastics. The students use all all these facilities, as can be observed on any school day. Numerous other Waldorf schools I have visited on three continents are similarly equipped.¹¹¹ While I cannot say with certainty that every last one of the hundreds of Waldorf School in Europe have a sports program, there is no reason to believe they do not. Further, there is nothing in the Waldorf pedagogy that could be construed to be against sports.¹¹²

¹¹¹ What is interesting from an American perspective is that there are no intermural competitive sports in the German Waldorf schools. This becomes understandable when you discover that there are no intermural competitive sports in the German public schools either. Such sports are the domain of local associations independent of the schools –like the US Little Leagues – and Waldorf students can, and do, participate just like their peers in German public schools.

¹¹² When asked about sports in the Waldorf School, Steiner responded thus (to an audience in England):
"[Question:] *How should instruction in gymnastics be carried out, and should sports be taught in an English school, hockey and cricket, for example, and if so in what way?*

I'm not sure I understand the accusation that there is "no jazz or popular music" in Waldorf schools. Does Staudenmaier mean that these subjects do not occur in the curriculum? Or does he mean to imply that there is some sort of blanket ban on such things anywhere on school grounds? As far as the curriculum goes, the music does generally lean towards folk and classical music, but that is the discretion of the individual class teachers and music subject teachers.¹¹³ The music program varies depending on the size of the school and the talents of the teachers. Singing is required from Kindergarten onwards, in ever increasing complexity, and in larger Waldorf schools choral singing is introduced by the sixth grade. Every student participates. European Waldorf students are as interested in popular music as students anywhere in the world.

I would certainly like to discover the source of Peter Staudenmaier's hilarious understanding that jazz and popular music are considered to harbor demonic forces; as usual, he has no footnotes for that claim.

Students in Waldorf schools hear fairy tales only in the first (and sometimes the second) grade. During that time, they do not *read* them; they *hear* them (and fairy tales are certainly not the only thing in the curriculum for those grades). After that the curriculum moves on to more challenging things. So Mr. Staudenmaier's claim that fairy tales are a staple of the Waldorf curriculum is only true for Kindergarten and first grade. Usually by second grade the curriculum has the teacher telling stories of great men and women of history and their achievements, told in a manner appropriate for the age.

Mr. Staudenmaier appears to be profoundly ignorant of even the most basic aspects of Waldorf education (the kind of things you learn if you tour a school even once) so his statement that Waldorf education contains a pervasive anti-technological and anti-scientific bias, a suspicion toward rational thought, and occasional outbreaks of racist gibberish must be treated with great suspicion. In fact I have a hard time even imagining what a pedagogy would have to look like in order to systematically teach students a suspicion toward rational thought. The important place of math and science, starting particularly with the Waldorf middle school curriculum, certainly makes it hard to call the pedagogy "anti-scientific."

The "occasional outbreaks of racist gibberish" is probably a reference to one incident in Holland in 1995, which resulted in a teacher being fired. Investigation by the authorities and the press (it

[Steiner:] It is emphatically not the aim of the Waldorf school method to suppress these things. They have their place simply because they play a great part in English life, and the children should grow up into life. Only please do not fall prey to the illusion that there is any other meaning in it than this, namely, that we ought not to make children strangers to their world. It is an error to believe that sports are of tremendous value in development. They are not of great value in development. Their only value is as a fashion dear to the English people, but we must not make the children strangers to the world by exclusion from all popular activities. You like sport in England, so the children should be introduced to sports. One should not meet with philistine opposition what may possibly be philistine itself.

Regarding "how it should really be taught", there is very little indeed to be said. For in these things it is really more or less so that the child imitates what someone does first. And to devise special artificial methods here would be something scarcely appropriate to the subject."

Rudolf Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995. Pages 134-135.

¹¹³ As an aside, how many US public schools have jazz or popular music in the curriculum? How many US public schools have *any* music in the curriculum?

I have included a section on the development of popular music in the 20th Century – with numerous recorded examples – in a 12th grade course on the history of the 20th Century that I teach at a Waldorf School. This fact alone disproves Staudenmaier's claim.

was front page material for several weeks) established that the incident was not a typical of Waldorf schools, yet it has remained a prime example used by Waldorf critics of the alleged racist bent they are so sure is inherent in Waldorf pedagogy.

Paragraph 39:

Next to Waldorf schools, the most widespread and apparently progressive version of applied anthroposophy is biodynamic agriculture. In Germany and North America, at least, biodynamics is an established part of the alternative agriculture scene. Many small growers use biodynamic methods on their farms or gardens; there are biodynamic vineyards and the Demeter line of biodynamic food products, as well as a profusion of pamphlets, periodicals and conferences on the theory and practice of biodynamic farming.

Finally, a factually accurate paragraph! It appears that Mr. Staudenmaier is more familiar with biodynamic agriculture than with Waldorf education. He has neglected to mention the success of biodynamic agriculture in South America, the Philippines, and Australia, and Egypt but that is probably an oversight. And biodynamic agriculture is not limited only to small growers; there are quite a few larger farms that employ the techniques, though Staudenmaier would be correct to point out that biodynamic techniques are not very easily applicable to large-scale factory farming.

Paragraph 40:

Although not a farmer himself, Steiner introduced the fundamental outlines of biodynamics near the end of his life and produced a substantial body of literature on the topic, which anthroposophists and biodynamic growers follow more or less faithfully. Biodynamics in practice often converges with the broader principles of organic farming. Its focus on maintaining soil fertility rather than on crop yield, its rejection of artificial chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and its view of the whole farm or plot as an ecosystem all mark the biodynamic approach as an eminently sensible and ecologically sound method of cultivation. But there is more to the story than that.

What is missing from this largely accurate summary is the fact that Steiner's indications in the Agriculture course are just that: indications, and not prescriptions. Beyond the rather obvious concerns such as viewing the farm as an ecological unit to be run on a sustainable basis, Steiner gave indications concerning other forces that influence the practices of farming. For example, he called attention to the role of the planets in the growth of plants. While this may at first appear rather nebulous, it can be quite easily tested in practice, and this is what Steiner encouraged. If Steiner says that the position of Mars in relation to the earth has an influence on the growth of rye, then this can be quite easily tested: plant some rye in a supposedly auspicious moment, then plant some more in a separate plot a week or two later and compare the growth of the two. You will very quickly determine whether Steiner's indications work in practice or not. And I would suggest that the experience of thousands of biodynamic farmers indicates that Steiner's indications do work in practice. If Mr. Staudenmaier is troubled as to how Mars could possibly influence the growth of rye, then that is a problem for him to work out. Disparaging the obvious success of Biodynamic farming from a theoretical position that it ought to be impossible is simply not scientific.

Paragraphs 41 to 43:

Biodynamic farming is based on Steiner's revelation of invisible cosmic forces and their effects on soil and flora. Anthroposophy teaches that the earth is an organism that breathes twice a day, that ethereal beings act upon the land, and that celestial bodies and their movements directly influence the growth of plants. Hence biodynamic farmers time their sowing to coincide with the proper planetary constellations, all a part of what they consider "the spiritual natural processes of the earth."^{PS26} Sometimes this "spiritual" approach takes unusual forms, as in the case of "preparation 500."

To make preparation 500, an integral component of anthroposophist agriculture, biodynamic farmers pack cow manure into a steer's horn and bury it in the ground. After leaving it there for one whole winter, they dig up the horn and mix the manure with water (it must be stirred for a full hour in a specific rhythm) to make a spray which is applied to the topsoil. All of this serves to channel "radiations which tend to etherealize and astralize" and thus "gather up and attract from the surrounding earth all that is ethereal and life-giving."^{PS27}

Non-anthroposophist organic growers are often inclined to dismiss such fanciful aspects of biodynamics as harmless, albeit pointless, appurtenances to an otherwise congenial cultivation technique. While this attitude has some merit, it is not reciprocated by biodynamic adherents, who emphasize that "The 'organic' farmer may well farm 'biologically' but he does not have the knowledge of how to work with dynamic forces—a knowledge that was given for the first time by Rudolf Steiner."^{PS28} For better or worse, biodynamic farming is inseparable from its anthroposophic context.

This, I feel, is an accurate description of biodynamic farming. It is obvious that Staudenmaier is highly suspicious of the non-sense-perceptible aspect, but he has not factually misrepresented it. That aspect makes more sense when explained by someone sympathetic to the aims of biodynamic farming should be obvious. With farming in particular a theoretical method can be judged by its effectiveness. Farmers are known for being practical and for being suspicious of highfalutin theories. The broad dissemination of biodynamic agriculture is therefore evidence of its practical success. If biodynamic farming is indeed inseparable from its anthroposophical context then this is powerful evidence that Steiner's understanding of invisible cosmic forces has real efficacy in practical reality.

Like Waldorf Education, Biodynamic farming *is* inseparable from its anthroposophical context. It is that context that I feel Staudenmaier has not understood, and it is his misunderstanding that is at the root of so much of his misinformation and the outright fabrications of this article.

As is typical, Staudenmaier cannot resist imputing ill will to anthroposophists, citing author Stewart Easton to demonstrate the supposed disdain that the cult-like adherents of Steiner's biodynamics hold towards mere organic farmers. This is a rather transparent ploy. The purported condescension in Easton's simple statement (reproduced in full in endnote PS28) has been added by Mr. Staudenmaier.

Paragraph 44:

Enthusiasm for biodynamics, however, has historically extended well beyond the boundaries of anthroposophy proper. For a time it also held a strong appeal for others who shared anthroposophists' nationalist background and occult orientation. Indeed it was through biodynamic farming that anthroposophy most directly influenced the course of German fascism.

Staudenmaier makes the preposterous claim that early anthroposophists were German nationalists. In actual fact anthroposophists in Steiner's time were staunchly internationalist and cosmopolitan in outlook. Indeed this was the main charge against them by the Nazi regime in the 1930's (see footnote 8 above). In this they were consistent with Steiner's own position. Steiner, himself an Austrian citizen, was unable to even enter Germany during the First World War. Due to his numerous international connections and his continual contact with people of all nationalities at his headquarters in Switzerland, Steiner would have ran a high risk of arrest for espionage had he attempted to enter Germany during the war.

Paragraph 44 is a segue into the next section, where Staudenmaier will argue that since a few marginal bureaucrats in the Nazi leadership were interested in the practical aspects of biodynamic farming in the early years of fascist rule (seven years after Steiner's death) anthroposophists are responsible for the Third Reich. From the evidence, some

anthroposophists did indeed exert some limited influence on one backwater of the National Socialist state: agricultural policy during the period 1933 to 1940. But they did not control agricultural policy or even change it very much. Calling this “directly influenc[ing] the course of German fascism” is perhaps in the very narrowest sense not untrue. However it implies considerably more and Staudenmaier argues the case far beyond what the evidence will support.

Paragraph 45:

Anthroposophy and the "Green Wing" of the Nazi Party

The mix of mysticism, romanticism, and pseudo-environmentalist concerns propagated by Steiner and his cohorts brought anthroposophy into close ideological contact with a grouping that has been described as the green wing of National Socialism [...]

At this point we go beyond the scope of this web site¹¹⁴ (it is, after all, called “Defending Steiner” and not “Defending Anything Anyone Staudenmaier Cares to Label 'Anthroposophist' Ever Did”). At some point in the future I may find time to address the allegations of Nazi collusion and even a causal role in the Holocaust, as well as examining in detail the record, for better or for worse, of anthroposophists during that era. Given Staudenmaier's own record so far it should not surprise anyone that he continues his modus operandi of misrepresentation of source material, mistranslation, selective and distorting quotation, and occasional fabrication of particularly incriminating evidence. In this article Staudenmaier has gone far beyond an unsympathetic yet honest scholarly presentation of Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy. There is no reason to believe he will behave any differently in writing about other anthroposophists. Based on a limited number of secondary sources, few of which are noted for their impartiality or scholarship, he has written an impressive piece of polemic. But it is highly inaccurate and very misleading.

¹¹⁴ This critical review of Staudenmaier's "Anthroposophy and Ecofascism" was originally written for the website www.defendingsteiner.com.

Endnotes

^{PS1} The "Nordic spirit" of Scandinavia continues to fascinate German anthroposophists; see, for example, Hans Mändl, *Vom Geist des Nordens*, Stuttgart 1966.

Yes, "Nordic spirit" of Scandinavia continued to fascinate at least one anthroposophist as late as 1966. The book *Vom Geist des Nordens* by Hans Mändl is the work of an Austrian Jew who fled the Nazis in 1938 and lived in Sweden until his death in the 1970's. (So the implication that Mändl is German would be incorrect - see <http://hem.passagen.se/thebee/comments/PS/Untruths-of-Staudenmaier-2.htm>). For Staudenmaier's assertion that Hans Mändl's book is proof that "the 'Nordic spirit' of Scandinavia continues to fascinate German anthroposophists" there is scant evidence. Mändl's book has been out of print and fairly hard to find for 38 years, and a search of German Anthroposophical literature from the last 20 years turns up no citations.

^{PS2} See the incisive passages on Steiner and anthroposophy in Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, Berkeley 1991.

The passages (pages 169-178) are hardly incisive. Bloch does the literary equivalent of name-dropping, mentioning in passing anyone and everyone of cultural significance. The index of names in a 500 page book might run 40 pages. Rarely does he achieve any "incisive" insight, and certainly not in the case of Steiner. Those instances where Steiner is brought are simply used to write him off as added. Writing in 1934 Bloch did note that Steiner's anthroposophy was antithetical to the Nazi ideology with the sentence: "With respect to race, it gets a bit blurry: the standards of judgment are not properly blond." (Ernst Bloch. *Literary Essays*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998. Page 17.)

^{PS3} On the connections between theosophy and the Nazis, see George Mosse, "The Occult Origins of National Socialism" in Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism*, New York 1999.

Here Staudenmaier has made the critical error of conflating anthroposophy and Theosophy, something no scholar writing on anthroposophy should do. Steiner's complex relationship to Theosophy has been written on extensively. Superficial similarities exist, but the fundamental differences are critical, and it was especially in the area of race that Steiner openly broke with Theosophy.

I find it interesting that Staudenmaier cites Mosse but appears to have missed the fact that Mosse, a respectable and fair scholar, did not regard Steiner as contributing to Nazism:

"Theosophy itself was not racist... but eventually racism allied itself with theosophy. Theosophy could, in fact, also support a new humanism. Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical Society, founded in Berlin in 1913, linked spiritualism to freedom and universalism."

Mosse, George. *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1978. Page 96.

^{PS4} Stewart Easton, *Man and World in the Light of Anthroposophy*, New York 1975, p. 164.

Easton's excellent overview of anthroposophy is one I would recommend to anyone wishing to gain a quick overview of Steiner's thought. I would refer a scholar wishing to demonstrate Steiner's errors to the original sources. Commentary on commentary has a high likelihood of distorting the original, especially when used as the basis for partisan attacks.

^{PS5} Steiner's racial teachings, a crucial element of the anthroposophic worldview, are spread throughout his work. The most concentrated and most chilling presentation is to be found in volume 349 of his collected works, published by the International Anthroposophic Society in Dornach, Switzerland. For a concise overview in English see Janet Biehl's section on Steiner in Biehl and Staudenmaier, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, San Francisco 1995, pp. 42-43.

The preposterous claim that Steiner's racial teachings are a crucial element of the "Anthroposophic" worldview is easily made and makes for alluring copy, but proof of such an allegation has not been offered here.

Rather than hear about what Janet Biehl thinks about Steiner's racism in Volume 349 of the complete works, why don't we just read it ourselves? To this end I have posted it here. Aside from the minor point that Staudenmaier cites the wrong publisher (which is actually the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung in Dornach) and misnames the General Anthroposophical Society, also located in Dornach (accuracy in

details, I find, is the mark of serious scholarship). Why should the reader settle for a 2-page overview of the subject in an openly hostile secondary source when the primary sources are available?

^{PS6} Wolfgang Treher, *Hitler Steiner Schreber*, Emmingden 1966, p. 70.

This "important" work was considered so scholarly that it was unable to find a publisher, so it was self-published by the author. That Staudenmaier finds it so compelling is an indication of the degree of critical thinking he brings to his investigation. Treher's thesis is that both Steiner and Hitler suffered from schizophrenia, that a mania, a physiological disturbance was at the root of both of their worldviews. Like Staudenmaier, Treher admits he is uninterested in understanding Steiner's views; they are sufficiently odd to him to automatically indicate mental illness. According to Treher, the onset of Steiner's psychosis started already when Steiner wrote his Ph.D. thesis in philosophy. Steiner tackled one of the oldest problems in philosophy: epistemology, or how the thinking mind comes to terms with outer reality. Treher takes this as evidence of schizophrenia – a split in Steiner's mind between reality and delusion. This conclusion, by someone who admittedly never read the work in question, is mind-bogglingly moronic. Perhaps this is the reason why no publisher would touch it. Further "evidence" is demonstrated by a statement by a friend of Steiner's that once Steiner started lecturing on Theosophy, he was "changed" and no longer had time for old friends. This supposedly proves that Steiner was a full-blown schizophrenic the moment he started lecturing on esoteric subjects. If Staudenmaier can find Treher "incisive" this can only be because he is either so predisposed to believing anything negative that he finds about Steiner as to completely overlook Treher's considerable problems, or he knows of this book only by reputation among anti-anthroposophist writers, and has not actually read it himself. I suspect the latter, since none of Treher's points are mentioned in the biographical overview of Steiner offered by Staudenmaier.

^{PS7} Steiner quoted in Jutta Ditfurth, *Feuer in die Herzen*, Hamburg 1992, p. 221.

The standards for citing second-hand require more information than this. For a trying to track down the source of three words in order to check their context, reference only to the secondary source is insufficient. Most scholarly formats require noting further information on the original source, and with good reason. It is entirely possible that Ditfurth has mangled the context, so anyone wanting to check would go straight to the original. It appears that Staudenmaier has simply accepted Ditfurth's argument wholesale with no further critical examination.

^{PS8} Rudolf Steiner, *Aus der Akasha-Chronik*, Basel 1955, p. 32.

Here's what Steiner says on page 32 of *Aus der Akasha-Chronik*. This English translation taken from the online [Rudolf Steiner eLib and Archive](#) where the reader can find the whole book.

"The ancestors of the Atlanteans lived in a region which has disappeared, the main part of which lay south of contemporary Asia. In theosophical writings they are called the Lemurians. After they had passed through various stages of development the greatest part of them declined. These became stunted men, whose descendants still inhabit certain parts of the earth today as so-called savage tribes. Only a small part of Lemurian humanity was capable of further development. From this part the Atlanteans were formed.

Later, something similar again took place. The greatest part of the Atlantean population declined, and from a small portion are descended the so-called Aryans who comprise present-day civilized humanity. According to the nomenclature of the science of the spirit, the Lemurians, Atlanteans and Aryans are root races of mankind. If one imagines that two such root races preceded the Lemurians and that two will succeed the Aryans in the future, one obtains a total of seven. One always arises from another in the manner just indicated with respect to the Lemurians, Atlanteans, and Aryans. Each root race has physical and mental characteristics which are quite different from those of the preceding one. While, for example, the Atlanteans especially developed memory and everything connected with it, at the present time it is the task of the Aryans to develop the faculty of thought and all that belongs to it."

The key phrase in German is:

"Er wurde zu verkümmerten Menschen, deren Nachkommen heute noch als sogenannte wilde Völker gewisse Teile der Erde bewohnen."

I would translate this as:

"These languished, and their descendants inhabit certain parts of the earth as the so-called wild peoples to this day."

The word "verkümmerten" is the adjectival form of the intransitive verb "verkümmern." In the dictionary it is defined as: of growth: to become stunted; of muscles: to atrophy; of plants or talents: to wither, wilt; of people: to languish (Langenscheidts Handwörterbuch Deutsch-Englisch, Berlin 1996, p. 1396). I feel that the adjective "languish" best fits the meaning of the original, though it is difficult to work into the flow of an English. In German you can "become languish people" but in English it doesn't work. So as a translator, you either have to drop the "become" ("wurde zu") because it is implicit in the activity of languishing, or you keep the word "become" and go for a more active adjective. The translator, one Karl E. Zimmer, opted for the phrasing "became stunted men," which I disagree with.

The use of the word "Aryan" is amazingly broad, as it includes all who "comprise present-day civilized humanity" a definition that includes at the very least the Chinese, Burmese, Arab, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Indian and Tibetan civilizations. Perhaps that is why Steiner referred to them as "the so-called Aryans." The terms "Aryan" and "root races" Steiner inherited from Blavatsky, but he was well aware that he was using the term very differently than most others of the time. Shortly thereafter he replaced the words for the time periods, referring to root races as Epochs and the Epoch after Atlantis the Post-Atlantean Epoch. Steiner never revised this book after its publication. Had he done so, it would have been specifically to change this phrasing, as he had done with other of his early works.

^{PS9} All quotes from Steiner as cited in Oliver Geden, *Rechte ökologie*, Berlin 1996, p. 127, 130, and 132. Steiner's typical remarks on Asian stupidity, French decadence, and Slavic primitiveness are of similar caliber.

These single-word quotes that Staudenmaier found in Geden attributed to Steiner are doubtless accurate in the narrowest technical sense. That is, the word doubtless occurs in the place stated. Lost is any meaningful context. Staudenmaier appears confident that he, following Geden, is fair and accurate. I submit that an analysis of Steiner's original statements does not bear this out. The problems are deeper than the mere fact that Staudenmaier has translated Steiner's reference to black people as "Negroes" using a deliberately archaic formulation that does not reflect the fact that Steiner was simply using the universally accepted terms of his day.

^{PS10} Steiner quoted in *ibid.*, p. 128.

Again, Staudenmaier is doubtless faithful to Geden's presentation. What he has not done is any critical examination of whether Geden accurately represents Steiner.

^{PS11} Schnurre quoted in *ibid.*, p. 144

The problems of attribution I mentioned above in the text. That Geden claims Schnurre is a racist has been uncritically accepted by Staudenmaier. Given the overt agenda the Geden is pursuing I would submit that further validation is warranted. It would indeed be puzzling to find Schnurre speaking publicly about overcoming racism while simultaneously espousing overtly racist positions. While not impossible, it does beg critical examination rather than wholesale acceptance.

^{PS12} 12. First two quotes from Daniel Gasman, *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism: Social Darwinism in Ernst Haeckel and the German Monist League*, New York 1971, pp. 16-17; third quote from George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, Madison 1985, p. 87. Haeckel's virulent racism is also extensively documented in Richard Lerner, *Final Solutions: Biology, Prejudice, and Genocide*, Philadelphia 1992.

Haeckel's influence on National Socialism is well documented, and Staudenmaier is mostly correct in his summary of it. What is not so logical is to maintain that anyone who read Haeckel must share his views. Neither must everyone who praises Haeckel's scientific work share Haeckel's racism. But with the simple formula: Steiner admired Haeckel, Haeckel was a racist, Staudenmaier would have us believe that it must follow: Steiner was a racist. Of course, it does not follow, and Staudenmaier cannot muster a better argument, for he would not be able to find any evidence to support it. Guilt by association is the only method of implicating Steiner.

Gasman's book does not mention Steiner at all beyond, in a footnote, linking Steiner and Haeckel via Johannes Hemleben's book of that title.

I find it interesting that Staudenmaier cites Mosse but appears to have missed the fact that Mosse, a respectable and fair scholar, did not regard Steiner as contributing to Nazism:

"Theosophy itself was not racist... but eventually racism allied itself with theosophy. Theosophy could, in fact, also support a new humanism. Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical Society, founded in Berlin in 1913, linked spiritualism to freedom and universalism."

Mosse, George. Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism. New York: Howard Fertig, 1978. Page 96.

PS13 Gasman, p. 31 and 23. See also the classic account from an anthroposophist perspective: Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner und Ernst Haeckel*, Stuttgart 1965.

Hemleben carefully shows the extent and limits of Steiner's admiration for Haeckel, and demonstrates conclusively that Steiner never subscribed to the Monist platform. If Staudenmaier is citing Hemleben to show that he has read extensively in the field, he might consider mentioning that Hemleben's work directly contradicts his own thesis. However, it is also possible that this book is mentioned only for its title (like Hans Mändl's Vom Geist des Nordens in footnote PS1) without Staudenmaier ever having glanced at its contents. The book is cited in Gasman as documenting the link between Steiner and Haeckel, and there is no evidence that Staudenmaier seen it himself.

PS14 Rudolf Steiner, *Mein Lebensgang*, Dornach 1983, p. 144.

Staudenmaier has blatantly mistranslated this quote, even while citing the original German. This is discussed at length in an earlier footnote.

PS15 Steiner quoted in *Volkmar Wölk*, "Neue Trends im ökofaschistischen Netzwerk" in Raimund Hethey and Peter Kratz, *In Bester Gesellschaft*, Göttingen 1991, p. 132.

Yet again Staudenmaier is lifting a short-phrase quote from a secondary source and constructing a damning portrait of Steiner's complex position on a complex subject. Steiner addressed the origins of the war at length in numerous contexts. The scholarship on the issues is considerable, yet Staudenmaier's grasp of it is feeble. While Steiner did mention conspiracies and Freemasons as factors, he did not consider these the sole, or even principle, causes of the war.

PS16 Steiner wrote that "the social organism is structured like the natural organism" in his nationalist pamphlet from 1919, "Aufruf an das deutsche Volk und an die Kulturwelt." The pamphlet is quoted extensively in Walter Abendroth, *Rudolf Steiner und die heutige Welt*, Munich 1969, pp.122-123.

Again Staudenmaier is admitting to not having read the original. Quotes of quotes are the extent of his scholarship on Steiner. Little wonder, then, that he is so often in error.

PS17 Quotes from Steiner as cited in Christoph Lindenberg, *Rudolf Steiner*, Hamburg 1992, pp. 111-112.

Lindenberg is a widely acknowledged expert on Steiner, and his two-volume biography published in 1998 is considered the most comprehensive yet. This earlier, and much shorter biography is also excellent. It yields to Staudenmaier a sentence that is factually accurate, for once.

PS18 Abendroth, p. 120.

Staudenmaier claims that Abendroth wrote of Steiner's Threefold Social Order that it is "naturally ordained". Aside from the fact that the translation is by Staudenmaier, the context has once again been obscured. Staudenmaier would like to demonstrate a rigidity and harshness of worldview to anthroposophists that is simply not there. Steiner's proposal itself is remarkably open and adaptable. It is couched on certain a priori premises, such as the fundamental right to individual freedom in the political sphere. If you "hold these truths to be self-evident" (borrowing from Jefferson) then it is proper to call Steiner's view "naturally ordained". It is "naturally ordained" that individuals should be free. If, on the other hand, you claim that economic exploitation is a requirement of Steiner's political vision then you have simply not studied Steiner.

PS19 Steiner quoted in Thomas Divis, "Rudolf Steiner und die Anthroposophie" in *ökoLinx* #13 (February 1994), p. 27.

This eight-word quote is not nearly as disturbing as Staudenmaier would make it. If you consider it for even a moment it makes perfect sense. In fact, whenever Staudenmaier quotes Steiner for more than a few words Steiner comes of as remarkably cogent.

^{PS20} From an untitled lecture manuscript in Steiner's archive, reproduced in Walter Kugler, *Rudolf Steiner und die Anthroposophie*, Cologne 1978, pp. 199-200.

At the risk of repeating myself, yet again Staudenmaier is admitting to not having studied the original sources. Quotes of quotes are the extent of his scholarship on Steiner.

^{PS21} Cited in Peter Bierl, Wurzelrassen, *Erzengel und Volksgeister: Die Anthroposophie Rudolf Steiners und die Waldorfpädagogik*, Hamburg 1999, p. 107

It appears that Staudenmaier cannot even cite works favorable to his own position properly. The sentence from which Staudenmaier has drawn his statement "The revolutionaries of the 1919 Munich council republic derided him as 'the witch doctor of decaying capitalism'" runs as follows:

Ziemlich treffend ist die Warnung, die im selben Monat [August, 1919] in der von Kurt Eisner gegründeten Münchner *Neuen Zeitung* erschienen. Unter dem Titel *Der Seelendoktor des verelendenden Kapitalismus* wurde die Dreigliederung zerpfückt und Steiner-Anhänger als Personen bezeichneter, die nach 'alkoholfreier Umnebelung schmachteten'. (107)

In English:

Quite appropriate is the warning that appeared the same month [August, 1919] in the Munich-based newspaper "*Neuen Zeitung*", founded by Kurt Eisner. Under the headline "The soul-doctor of misery-causing capitalism", threefoldness was torn apart and Steiner's followers described as people who 'yearn for an alcohol-free haze.'

Getting "witch-doctor" out of *Seelendoktor* (soul-doctor) requires taking considerable creative license with the original, and the word *verelendenden* does not translate to 'decaying' ('misery-causing' is probably the closest approximation – the word is a creative adjective construction based on the root *elend* – meaning misery). Nor is it clear how this article is supposed to represent all or any of the revolutionaries of the 1919 Munich council. The author or authors of the article are not listed in Bierl's text, only the founder of the paper, Kurt Eisner, who was assassinated in February 1919, six months before the article was published. So either Staudenmaier has additional sources he has failed to cite on the particulars of the article whose title he has mistranslated, or he has simply made an unsupported logical leap and simply assumed that because of the paper in which it was published, it must therefore be an official position of the entire Munich council.

^{PS22} See Charlotte Rudolph, *Waldorf-Erziehung: Wege zur Versteinierung*, Darmstadt 1987. No systematic surveys of Waldorf schooling are available. In this section I have relied chiefly on the work of former Waldorf teachers like Rudolph as well as the excellent critical study by Bierl.

I find it amazing that Mr. Staudenmaier was unable to find any trace of "systematic surveys" of Waldorf schooling. Perhaps it is a question of definition, for there is not single book or series that combines every aspect of Waldorf education in one volume. However, there are two excellent surveys of the entire curriculum in English (Rawson, Martyn and Richter, Tobias, eds. [The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum](#). Forest Row, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2000 and Cradock, Stephen and Stockmeyer, Karl, eds. [Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools](#). 4th Revised edition. Forest Row, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2001.), as well as books on every aspect of Waldorf education and Waldorf Schools, from each specialized subject in the curriculum to school administration. Including books in German, the total exceeds a thousand volumes, and then there are numerous periodicals in many languages. Rather than attempt to cite them all, I will simply refer to one publisher: www.anthropress.org. The excuse for relying on two blatantly biased and highly inaccurate German sources is simply not credible.

^{PS23} From an international Waldorf teachers conference in 1996, cited in Bierl, p. 204.

Bierl's text cites Stephan Leber as saying this in a Dornach conference of Waldorf Teachers in 1996. Bierl's cited source is a book edited by Heinz Zimmermann, titled *Reincarnation und Karma in der*

Erziehung (Reincarnation and karma in education) published in Dornach, 1998. As I mentioned above, the fact that anthroposophy is the basis of Waldorf education is hardly a secret.

^{PS24} Rudolf Steiner, *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, London 1947, p. 40.

Steiner hardly "demanded" that Waldorf schools be staffed only by anthroposophists. Such an attitude would be fundamentally out of character for him. He simply explained that he could not have founded the first Waldorf school without the help of a group of dedicated anthroposophists. In lecture quoted by Staudenmaier, given at Manchester College in Oxford, England on August 20th, 1923 at the invitation of professor (of Education) Millicent Mackenzie, Rudolf Steiner said:

"Thus I may say: when my little booklet The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy appeared [in 1909], I was speaking on education there as one who disagrees with much in modern education, who would like to see this or the other treated more fundamentally, and so on. But at the time this little book was written I should not have been able to undertake such a thing as directing the Waldorf School. For it was essential for such a task to have a college of teachers with a knowledge of man originating in the spiritual world. This knowledge of man is exceedingly hard to come by to-day; in comparison it is easy for us to study natural science. It is comparatively easy to come and see what the final member of organic evolution is. ... Now in order to educate we need a human science, - and a practical human science at that - a human science that applies to every individual child. And for this we need a general human science." (Reproduced in: Rudolf Steiner. The Spiritual Ground of Education. Blauvelt, NY: Garber Communications, 1989. Page 40.)

Steiner is clearly not "demanding" that all Waldorf Schools only ever be staffed by anthroposophists. He did explicitly found Waldorf pedagogy on the Anthroposophical conception of the human being, and said as much in numerous places. Staudenmaier's liberties in paraphrasing serve to distort both the tone and the content of the passages he is citing.

^{PS25} Easton, p. 388.

This description by Easton is essentially correct, as strange as it may seem absent the supporting background given in earlier pages that details how karma operates in the anthroposophical understanding. I would recommend Easton's chapter on Waldorf Education, on pages 382-407 as an excellent overview of the aims of the movement. I find it odd the Staudenmaier cites this paragraph without giving any indication of having read the rest chapter from which it is taken. Stranger still is the earlier claim that no comprehensive overview of Waldorf education exists when he is citing one here.

^{PS26} Lindenberg, p. 134.

Once again Lindenberg yields a quote that is accurate. Staudenmaier does his best to spin the respect for the earth and its spiritual aspects which are inherent in Biodynamic farming into something both silly and dangerous, but the fact itself remains undisputed.

^{PS27} Steiner, Lecture Four from the 1924 Course on Agriculture.

I must note that Staudenmaier has not cited a publisher or page-number for these short-phrase "quotations". The two phrases he quotes: "radiations which tend to etherealize and astralize" and "gather up and attract from the surrounding earth all that is ethereal and life-giving" are taken out of context, as Steiner never described the purpose of the preparation in those words. The first is taken from a sentence found on page 99 of the present German edition, "Dadurch, daß das Kuhhorn äußerlich von der Erde umgeben ist, strahlen alle Strahlen in seine innere Höhlung hinein, die im sinne der Ätherisierung und Astralisierung gehen." The 1958 translation by George Adams (page 74) from which Staudenmaier probably took this reads, "Through the fact that it is outwardly surrounded by the earth, all radiations that tend to etherealize and astralize are poured into the inner hollow of the horn." Thus, it is not the spray that is made by mixing the contents of the horn that possesses the qualities, but the contents of the horn while it is in the earth. This is perhaps a minor point, but also very telling of the exactitude of Staudenmaier's scholarship.

The second quote comes from the next sentence in the text, "And the manure inside the horn is inwardly quickened with these forces, which thus gather up and attract from the surrounding earth all that is

ethereal and life-giving." The gathering up and attracting is done inside the buried cows horn, and not by the Preparation 500 once it has been spread.

In treating such a complex subject as the making of Preparation 500 and its use in such an offhand manner, Staudenmaier has failed to adequately explain Steiner's carefully grounded indications. But then, his goal is merely to show how silly it all is, rather than to actually understand it. See, Steiner, Rudolf. Agriculture. London: Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association, 1972. Page 74.

^{PS28} Easton, p. 444

"Unlike most farmers who farm in what they speak of as an "organic" manner, the biodynamic farmer recognizes fully that the earth has indeed lost much of its fertility and is losing more every day, and that it is simply not enough in the present age merely to refuse to use herbicides, insecticides and chemical fertilizer, and to manufacture compost from waste farm products in the traditional manner. These things in themselves are good as far as they go, but much more is needed to restore its lost fertility to the earth. The 'organic' farmer may well farm 'biologically' but he does not have the knowledge of how to work with dynamic forces—a knowledge that was given for the first time by Rudolf Steiner."

Easton's statement is probably shared by many practicing biodynamic farmers, and represents what many would consider a simple fact. This does not mean that biodynamic farmers do not frequently make common cause with other organic farmers and supporters of sustainable agriculture. The movement is not nearly as insular as Mr. Staudenmaier makes it out to be.

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