

## How Did Everything Begin?

Perseus Publishing, Basle ("Perseus Verlag Basel") was founded by T. H. Meyer in 1990. Two motives led to this founding: they are related to each other. The first motive arose from Meyer's biography of D. N. Dunlop (1868 – 1935). Dunlop was a friend of W. B. Yeats' and of the poet and artist AE; he was also one of the first admirers of the works of H. P. Blavatsky and Mabel Collins (1851 - 1927). He was an excellent businessman, a prominent expert on the world economy and an extremely able organiser: in 1924 he initiated the World Power Conference, and he had intended to convene a World Economic Conference in order to open up new possibilities for the realisation of the concept of the Threefold Social Order. In 1922 he met Rudolf Steiner (1861 -1925), and organised the first anthroposophical Summer Schools in Britain. He became the Secretary General of the British branch of the Anthroposophical Society and continued to hold this office until he was excluded from the Society in 1935.

The second motive for founding Perseus Publishing was the wish to have a completely independent forum for the exchange of ideas, as a contribution to a truly free "spiritual life" in society such as Dunlop had always striven for. This founding came about solely through the initiative of an individual person, and the publishing house is in no way connected with or dependent on any present-day political, economic or spiritual institution.

The name "Perseus" refers to back to Greek mythology, to the victor over the monster Medusa, whose gaze killed anyone who looked her directly in the face. Medusa represents all ancient pre-rational forces, which Perseus can only vanquish by employing his intellect, that is (in the metaphor of the myth) by using his shield as a mirror in which he perceives these forces in reflection.

## What Are the Goals of Perseus Publishing?

As the name says, the products of Perseus Publishing are intended to help overcome all kinds of irrational concepts of our time - be they nationalism, racism, the narrowing of the concept of "science" to only natural science, timid anti-spiritualism, or others. If we consider the field of history and current affairs, we see that many such irrational concepts form the basis for contemporary views on, for example, the role of Germany today, the role of Germany at the outbreak of the First World War, the process of European unification or current United States foreign policy. The publications of Andreas Bracher (born 1960) and the biography of Ludwig Polzer-Hoditz (1869 - 1945) intend to shed a clarifying light on these questions.

It is still a wide-spread form of behaviour today that spiritual categories such as the idea of reincarnation and karma (destiny) or the "demonic" as a rational category are not really taken seriously, with all the consequences this would entail. Not many people have recognised yet that there is a connection between this attitude and the fact that the Holocaust and other subsequent catastrophes have become possible. The well-known historian Friedrich

Meinecke demanded the introduction of the "demonic" as a rational category into the consideration of all historical events. The most concrete fulfilment of this demand to broaden the conceptual horizon is Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science. Steiner undertook to complement natural science with a science of the spiritual elements of our existence; to date, the educated public has taken far too little note of this enterprise. This negligence has led not only Germany, but all of mankind to the brink of an unforeseen spiritual abyss that gapes much deeper than the one which has been opened to mankind by the terrible events of September 11th, 2001. Several Perseus publications therefore attempt to facilitate a better understanding of R. Steiner's Spiritual Science; this is quite possible merely through the use of every-day common sense. Perseus Publishing also strives to counter any confusing of Steiner's endeavours with spiritual viewpoints which are influenced by irrationalism or one-sided religious attitudes.

Another aspect of Steiner's work is illustrated in the Perseus publication dealing with the life and work of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer (1899 - 1961): here we can see how indications resulting from Spiritual Science can lead to a new form of technology which is based on an understanding of the world of the etheric. But in accordance with the two founding motives, the Perseus programme of publications is not just intended for people interested in Spiritual Science, it addresses every serious contemporary who is prepared to exercise her or his rational faculties.

These publications attempt to facilitate the insight that it is a crisis of modern man's consciousness which lies behind all material, political and religious conflicts and catastrophes today. Modern man is standing on a threshold, he/she is about to gain new insights into the spiritual nature of the world, including the material world. The difficulty of crossing this threshold courageously and in a self-possessed manner can be regarded as the basic difficulty of modern man. The works of Barbro Karlen (born 1954) show how strongly young people wish to experience this crossing of the threshold.

## The Monthly Journal

About 25 years ago T. H. Meyer discovered the anthroposophical monthly journal *The Present Age*, which was edited by Walter Johannes Stein and published in London in the 1930's, in the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. This led to his intention of founding a similar periodical for our time. He was able to fulfill this intention after he finished his biography on Ludwig Count Polzer-Hoditz - A European (1869 - 1945) ("Ludwig Graf Polzer-Hoditz - Ein Europäer). Polzer was involved in the question of the future of Europe, which has become such a burning issue today, to a greater extent than almost all of his contemporaries. On this basis, and with the help of a number of further contributors, the first issue of the monthly journal "The European - Symptomatic Events in Politics, Cultural Life and the Economy - Monthly Journal on the Basis of Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science" (*Der Europäer*) was published in November 1996.

The subtitle refers to the three basic elements of all human social life as they

are described in the concept of the Threefold Social Order. Today these elements are subject to the one-sided domination of the economic sphere, and can therefore only interact in a chaotic manner; in future these elements will have to be emancipated to the three relatively autonomous spheres of the "social life" of the political and the judiciary, of culture and spirit, and of the economy. Without this transformation, the three great ideals of the French Revolution, equality, liberty and fraternity, will continue to lack a suitable social structure through which they can take effect constructively, and not in a destructive manner, in the modern social world.

The subtitle "symptomatic events" means that we do not intend to add a few superfluous drops to the flood of information in which mankind is already drowning. "Symptomatic" means that the journal intends to sharply illuminate the specific quality of certain decisive events and facts in today's world. The new element of this periodical is therefore not so much new information as the new way in which light is shed on known facts.

We do not follow R. Steiner's Spiritual Science in a dogmatic sense, but for the purpose of method: everyone can, in principle, learn the method of "symptomatic observation" of historical and current events; and Steiner gives us, to our minds, the most comprehensive and coherent instruction for this method.

## Supporters' Association

In order to publish books or articles in the journal, activities are not only necessary in the economic and technical sphere, but in many others as well. A good part of this additional work consists of research done by various persons in many different fields. This makes trips to specific destinations necessary. In addition, translation work must be done regularly. Organising and carrying out the European Saturday Seminars also goes beyond the work of publishing. Perseus Publishing activities therefore pertain only partly to the economic sphere; the rest fulfill tasks of the "life of culture" in society. The income from the sale of books and the journal, which in some cases is augmented by donations from private sponsors, suffices to support the infrastructure and meet the modest costs for personnel for the publishing house and the journal; but it is in no way sufficient to cover the costs of Perseus Publishing's activities for the cultural sphere. For this reason the "Perseus Supporters' Association" (Perseus-Förderkreis) was founded in 2000. About 50 persons have joined so far, and it would be good if more were to follow.

## Reactions to Perseus Publications

Several Perseus publications have given rise to controversial debate by the public in general as well as among anthroposophically oriented readers.

For example, when we published the book "Das Rätsel des Judentums" ("The Enigma of the Jewish People") by Ludwig Thieben, an anthroposophist of Jewish descent, the absurd charge was levelled at us that we were

anti-Semiticly oriented. This superficial accusation could not only be unmasked by anyone with ordinary common sense; its emptiness was also confirmed by the result of an investigation by the Basle Attorney General . (In the meantime, the book has been sold out).

On the other hand, our publishing house was subject to the equally absurd accusation by certain people that our publication of Barbro Karlen's memories of a previous life during the Holocaust contributed to the trivialisation of this most terrible crime against humanity.

Our two-volume Helmuth von Moltke - Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Wirken (Helmuth von Moltke - Documents on his Life and Activity) (sold out; a second edition is planned for the end of 2002) was criticised in a recent publication by Cambridge University Press in an unobjective manner resulting from superficial and one-sided research.

Meyer's book Der unverbrüchliche Vertrag - Roman zur Jahrtausendwende ("The Steadfast Contract - A Novel About the Millenium") evoked, in certain circles of the Anthroposophical Society, reactions ranging from hefty irritation to outright rejection. Paradoxically, the last Secretary General of the Anthroposophical Society of the United States expressed a favourable opinion of the book.

We consider such controversial and disapproving echoes - even more than the positive reactions, which we of course also get - to be a special incentive to remain true to the publishing philosophy which we have pursued so far.

## How you can contact us

✉ Perseus Publishing Basel  
Leonhardsgraben 38 A, CH - 4051 Basel  
phone: (0041) +61 263'93'33, fax: (0041) +61 261'68'36  
email: [perseus@perseus.ch](mailto:perseus@perseus.ch)

✉ Journal «DER EUROPÄER»  
General-Guisan-Str. 73, CH-4054 Basel  
phone/fax: (0041) +61/302 88 58  
email: [e.administration@bluewin.ch](mailto:e.administration@bluewin.ch)