GOETHEANUM COMMUNICATIONS

Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, 29 September 2022

**The uniqueness of every individuality**

**The General Anthroposophical Section at the Goetheanum explores works of Jewish Humanism**

**Human dignity is violated by discrimination and wars. In a project spanning several years, Constanza Kaliks and Peter Selg, leaders of the General Anthroposophical Section at the Goetheanum, are exploring and describing works and contributions in Jewish Humanism.**

Constanza Kaliks, member of the leadership of the General Anthroposophical Section says that “there are many voices on humanism in the twentieth century.” Given the acute conflicts and cultural challenges of our time, Constanza Kaliks and her colleague Peter Selg find exploring the contributions of Jewish humanism an existential task.

Why should this be done in a section of the School of Spiritual Science founded by Rudolf Steiner? In his book on anthroposophy, Judaism and antisemitism, Peter Selg describes Rudolf Steiner‘s differentiated relationship to Judaism, Zionism and antisemitism, which ranged from deep respect for the cultural and scientific achievements of people connected with Jewish culture to a critical view of a national Zionism that he considered dangerous and outdated (as he did all nationalist movements). In the 1880s, Rudolf Steiner also expressed himself in terms that alienated some of his Jewish friends. Peter Selg contextualizes these statements in the discourse of the time and shows that Rudolf Steiner went on to take a sympathetic interest in the developments in Palestine, that he valued the work of Martin Buber and that he was closely connected with Zionists such as Ernst Müller and Hugo Bergman.

Based on the works of twentieth century Jewish philosophers, Peter Selg and Constanza Kaliks identify these contributions to the “deeper understanding of the present time”, locating them close to the social and spiritual concerns of the School of Spiritual Science. Constanza Kaliks thinks that the perspectives described in Jewish Humanism include the spiritual dimension of the human being. “Humaneness itself is rooted in the interest in others. It opens up a dialogue with oneself, with others and with the world that points to an extended horizon of knowledge that is needed. It includes the opportunity of a fruitful dialogue between the impulse behind the School of Spiritual Science and the philosophers of Jewish Humanism.”

Peter Selg and Constanza Kaliks are convinced that the dialogue between anthroposophy and Jewish Humanism, which has not yet taken place, needs to happen now. With this in mind, they began in 2021 to study the biographies, writings and activities of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Primo Levi, Hans Jonas, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, Gustav Landauer and Maria Krehbiel-Darmstädter, based on a comprehensive body of scientific primary and secondary literature. Further events, on Emmanuel Levinas and Paul Celan, are to follow later in 2023. The series will continue in 2024/2025, paying homage to the work of Ernst Müller, Hugo Bergmann, Gershom Scholem and Margarete Susman.

(2911 characters/SJ; English by Margot M. Saar)

**Video series on Jewish Humanism (German; subtitles: auto-generated English)** allgemeine-sektion.goetheanum.ch/de/dialogphilosophie-zum-juedischen-humanismus-und-zur-interkulturalitaet   
**Book (German)** Peter Selg, Constanza Kaliks: Die Gegenwart des Anderen. Über Martin Buber und Franz Rosenzweig [The presence of the other. On Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig], Verlag am Goetheanum 2022   
**Book (German)** Constanza Kaliks, Peter Selg, Udi Levy, Iftach Ben Aharon: Anthroposophie, Judentum und Antisemitismus [Anthroposophy, Judaism and Antisemitism], Verlag am Goetheanum 2023

**Goetheanum Leadership statement** Anthroposophy and Racism  
**Web** goetheanum.ch/en/news/working-paper-on-racism

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