Into the Heart's Land

by Henry Barnes

The First Summer School and a Personal Interlude

It was July 1933. The Threefold Farm, on Hungry Hollow Road in Spring Valley, New York, had celebrated its seventh birthday. The Rudolf Steiner School was five years old. Eurythmy was an established presence. Dr. Christoph Linder was building a practice based on the principles of anthroposophically extended medicine, which was also served by the Weleda pharmaceutical initiative. Anthroposophy was indeed beginning to put down roots, even through these were primarily focused in and around New York City.

At this time, Ralph Courtney and the Threefold Group undertook an initiative that was to have far-reaching consequences. Three distinguished representatives of the anthroposophical movement in Europe were invited to participate in the first anthroposophical summer school, to be held at the Threefold Farm that July.

Two of the three speakers were members of the faculty of the original Waldorf school in Stuttgart. The third was the young scientist destined to play a decisive role in the further evolution of Anthroposophy in America. Maria Roeschl and Ernst Lehrs were the teachers, later united in marriage while they lived in England after the Waldorf school closed in 1938 and the outbreak of World War II. Maria Roeschl was Austrian by birth; a woman of great erudition, a classical scholar, and a doctor of philosophy. But she was also an individual of inborn spirituality, deepened and disciplined through her years as a personal pupil of Rudolf Steiner. Ernst Lehrs was a teacher of science, a man of keen intelligence, and a personal pupil of Dr. Steiner.

Both Roeschl and Lehrs taught the older students in Stuttgart. Maria Roeschl was a member of the circle of teachers who carried the "free religious instruction" and the services, inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner in response to the requests of parents of the School. At the time of the Christmas Foundation, Roeschl had been asked by Steiner to lead the "Section for the Spiritual Striving of Youth," part of the newly inaugurated School of Spiritual Science (see chapter fifty-nine). The young scientist Ehrenfried Pfeiffer was, in a very real sense, a protégé of Rudolf Steiner. Pfeiffer was thirty-four at the time of the first summer school conference.

Ralph Courtney's initiative, wholeheartedly backed and supported by Charlotte Parker and the Threefold Group, as well as by Henry Monges and the society's council, was a real inauguration deed. This was subsequently confirmed by the fact that every following summer, without interruption, the Threefold Community hosted one, or more, conferences presenting one aspect or another of anthroposophical activity and research.

To fill out the picture—especially for those who know the Threefold Community—a few historical details may be of interest. Where Holder House now stands there stood a low wooden building known as the summer kitchen, with a dining porch facing the woods behind it. Below the summer kitchen, at the edge of the woods, a large tent had been erected to serve as the "conference hall," where lectures were held. It was under this tent that Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, with his glorious disregard for the fine points of the English language, lectured both on scientific and agricultural as well as on cultural and historical subjects. He unwittingly puzzled and delighted his audience on at least one occasion when he spoke about the spiritual origins of modern culture; several times he referred to "the goats of the pasture." A puzzled wonderment descended on his listeners, until, one after another, a look of delighted understanding spread on their faces as they realized that in fact the "goats of the pasture" meant "the gods of the past."

Another, equally charming accompaniment to these earnest anthroposophical lectures, was occasioned by the participation of "Mr. Go-On," Mrs. Stockton's little dachshund that attended the lectures with his mistress, leashed to a tent pole. When a rabbit or a squirrel expressed interest in what was going on in "their woods," Mr. Go-On indignantly leapt to frighten the intruder—and the tent trembled and shook as he leaped.

Eurythmy was part of the daily program, and Mrs. Miriam Wallace was its teacher. The setting was the dining porch of the summer kitchen. The dining tables, with all their corners cut off, were stacked against the wall. In retrospect, the author of this volume now realizes that this was one of the soul trials, imposed by karma, to test the courage and spiritual determination of a young twenty-year old, as he dutifully wound his way in and out,

in company with a number of ladies of uncertain ages, who appeared to be far more advanced in this new art than he.

Another observation that awakened a sense of expectant wonder was the occasion when he observed someone being led by a gentleman he had been introduced to as "Dr. Linder" toward the enclosed garden, and was told that "the doctor was taking him to be stung by a bee." This, it was added, "was to help his arthritis."

These details are mentioned to underline the fact that this first anthroposophical summer school was, indeed, a pioneer groundbreaking event for spiritual science on the North American continent.

A Personal Interlude

It is at this point that a personal element enters the otherwise objective story. Among the thirty or so participants were several young people in their early twenties. One of them, the young man mentioned briefly above, who had just graduated from Harvard College, was there as the guest of an older woman, the mother of his friend, who had ended his life tragically a year and a half before. Henry Barnes and Peter Stockton had grown up together as classmates in the Lincoln School of Teachers College. They had both entered the first grade in 1918, the second year of the school's existence. The Lincoln School in New York and the Francis Parker School in Chicago were the pioneer schools to introduce the educational philosophy of John Dewey, which spearheaded the progressive educational movement of the early and mid-twentieth century. Creative individual self-expression was the underlying ideal. The schools were coeducational; led from kindergarten through high school, and united an intellectual, scientific orientation with artistic and practical experiences throughout the grades. Backed by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Lincoln School attracted creative, innovative teachers from many parts of the United States and encouraged them to be original and creative in their teaching. To underline its radical break with the traditional classical schools based on the British model, the Lincoln School refused to teach Latin and Greek. It was to be, through and through, a modern, experimental school. It opened in 1917 in its own building on Park Avenue and attracted students from well-to-do New York families who were open to a new direction in education and were willing to risk an unconventional approach. This was the educational environment in which Peter and Henry grew up. They then went on to college together and were roommates in the winter of 1931–1932.

It was on a Friday in January 1932 that Peter—leaving a note that he would be away for the weekend—left Cambridge and headed for Detroit, proceeding up the Michigan peninsula to a village on the shore of Lake

Peter Stockton
November 18, 1912–January 18, 1932

Huron. There he took a room in the local inn and, with Bacon's essay on death open on the bed before him, kneeled and shot himself through the heart. This was January 18, 1932.

On arriving at the inn in Harbor Beach, Peter had registered as Peter B…, and gave his address as Santa Fe, New Mexico, where his sister was then living with her husband and her two small boys. The Harbor Beach community was made up largely of Scandinavian immigrants, who were convinced that the young man who had died came from the east, not the west, and that his people would find him. They cared for his body, lit candles, and kept something of a vigil for the unknown young stranger. It was, however, many, many days before his family traced his steps to the remote village on the shore of Lake Huron.

Besides the volume of Bacon's essays, Peter had taken two other books with him on his fateful journey: *Only Yesterday,* a brilliant journalistic review of the postwar years in America, and the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, in which he had underlined a number of passages, among which was: "I must be true to myself, as the emerald is true to its greenness."

Peter Stockton was nineteen when he died. His mother, Miriam Stockton, while she was pregnant with Peter, had read a book that impressed her deeply. It was entitled *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, by a man called Rudolf Steiner. Miriam Stockton knew nothing further about the author. She was the wife of a busy New York lawyer, and, with her husband, was actively engaged in several cultural initiatives. Miriam and Herbert Stockton were instrumental, for instance, in helping to bring members of the Moscow Art Theater to New York, and were active in the founding of the American Laboratory Theater, which became a significant factor in the life of drama and theater of the 1920s and early 1930s. Miriam Stockton had read the Steiner book with great interest and went on with her busy life. After Peter's disappearance, however, she remembered this book and returned to it, determined to accompany Peter inwardly wherever his destiny had led him.

It was during the ensuing months of early 1932 that Herbert Stockton saw an announcement in the *New York Times* for a lecture by Jeanne de Mare, in which Rudolf Steiner's name was mentioned. With this, Miriam Stockton came into contact with the Anthroposophical Society and its

activities in New York City. It was she who then invited her daughter, Anne Stockton Goodwin, and Henry Barnes to the summer conference at the Threefold Farm the following year.

As the young Henry Barnes now finds himself—more than seventy years later—the author of this volume, he will shift from third person to first for at least a certain chapter in our story.

Prior to Peter's death, teaching, as a career, had been far from my thoughts. I wanted to do something *important*. Foreign service, in some form, seemed an attractive direction. But with Peter's passing, teaching seemed to become more and more a real calling. Thomas Jefferson's thoughts on the importance of education in a democracy served as a guiding light. With my years of experience in the Lincoln School in mind—and Peter was not the only gifted Lincoln graduate to take his own life—a question stirred vaguely within me: Is there an education that can go deeper to reach the very foundations of human life? With such questions arising, all that Maria Roeschl and Ernst Lehrs told about the school where they taught in Germany seemed to speak directly to my questions. I also thought of my younger brother, Edward, then sixteen years old, going through an adolescent crisis at a well-known boys' preparatory school. In consultation with Mrs. Stockton, we decided to invite him to come down to hear about this school and these interesting new ideas about education. The invitation was given, Edward arrived, and, on hearing about this new school, declared, "That's the school I want to go to."

A similar intention was stirring in me. In a few weeks I would turn twenty-one. I was lucky enough to have a good job, starting in the autumn as an assistant to George St. John, the headmaster of the Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut. These were Depression years, and to have such a job lined up was a real feather in my cap. But the thought persisted: I want to go to Stuttgart and learn about this new kind of education.

We persuaded our parents to invite Dr. Roeschl and Dr. Lehrs to visit us in Stonington, Connecticut, so they could hear firsthand about this school. Our father was apprehensive about Edward going, but our mother, always the pioneer, saw the good possibilities and said, "If Henry goes, Edward can go, too." I informed Mr. St. John of my wish to go to Stuttgart, to which he responded, "Well, then, go now and get it out of your system. And then come back to Choate." On August 12, I celebrated my twenty-first birthday, inherited a thousand dollars, and, some ten days later, Edward and I were underway with doctors Roeschl and Lehrs, sailing for Cuxhaven, the port of Hamburg. Little did these two naïve young Americans realize the historical destiny into which they were entering.

We were met at the boat by a friend of Roeschl and Lehrs, who we learned was a teacher in the Waldorf School. She was a small, feminine

figure with a friendly smile, and keen blue eyes behind steel-rimmed glasses, her blond hair pulled back tight into a bun. This person was introduced to us as Fraulein Doctor Caroline von Heydebrand. As we drove through Hamburg, we passed a beautiful lake in that city's "Central Park." There was a fresh breeze blowing and the lake was alive with white-crested waves. Both young Americans were native sailors and, especially the younger one was overwhelmed by a longing to get out on the lake, and sail. To my great surprise, our older German companions asked us if we wanted to take a quick sail.

The answer was immediate and unequivocal; "Yes, let's sail. Who would like to come with us?" The little lady who had met us as we landed volunteered, and in a short time, we were out on the lake, the sails billowing and the boat keeling to the wind. Our passenger glanced apprehensively from side to side as the boat careened in the stiff breeze and the waves dashed past the lee gunwale close to where she was sitting. Only much later did I learn that our passenger was perhaps the most distinguished member of the original Waldorf faculty, selected, trained, and appointed by Rudolf Steiner himself. Thank God we didn't capsize, but returned Caroline von Heydebrand safely to shore. The readiness of these three pioneers of Waldorf education to humor the crazy whims of two wild young Americans is a tribute to their pedagogical insight and creative adaptability.

Edward entered the eleventh grade, and I joined the teacher training seminar, where I learned to appreciate my sailing companion in her capacity as a truly remarkable pedagogue. For both brothers, the Stuttgart experience was decisive. For Edward, it was both the encounter with German Idealism through the teaching of Dr. Erich Schwebsch and the opportunity to find himself through the experience of sculpture under the artistic guidance of Max Wolffhügel, which especially impressed him. Edward was not a naturally gifted artist, but the studio work with Wolffhügel spoke in a wonderfully awakening way to his sensitive and searching soul. He lived with a family not far from the school and he spent many afternoons, after school, working in the sculpture studio. One afternoon, he showed me what he had been working on. I was stunned to discover that the head he had modeled in clay was a speaking likeness of my friend Peter. Working entirely from memory, Edward, without training or natural gift, had called forth out of the formless clay a true portrait of Peter. I had been so completely absorbed in my own experience of Peter's disappearance and death that it had not occurred to me that it might also have deeply affected my four-year younger brother. The two years that Edward spent in the Waldorf School were decisive in building the foundation of inner self-confidence and equilibrium and awakening a sense of purpose and direction. When he left Stuttgart to return home, his goal was to become an anthroposophi-

cal doctor. Although this did not materialize, he became an exceptional science teacher, much respected and appreciated by his students. He also later apprenticed as a biodynamic farmer under the direction of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer.

For me, the year in Stuttgart was a wonderfully well-grounded entry into Anthroposophy. But it was also an awakening to the dramatic destiny of our time. I experienced, on one hand, a sense of heartfelt community with the culture of Central Europe, especially as it came to expression in Anthroposophy. I also witnessed the gradual strangulation of the Waldorf School by the National Socialist government, the infection of the German people with fear and suspicion, and the building of a false feeling of community based on blood ties. I must also say that I experienced the Anthroposophical Society tearing itself apart in the divisions that had followed Rudolf Steiner's death on March 30, 1925. Both Maria Roeschl and Ernst Lehrs looked to Ita Wegman as the carrier of the spiritual impulse with which they felt connected. Whereas Hermann von Baravalle, in particular, was committed to the support of Marie Steiner and championed her cause within the Stuttgart faculty, I felt at home with Lehrs, Roeschl, and the "Wegman stream," but also wanted also to experience the "other side." So, at Whitsun 1934, I got on my bicycle and rode through the Black Forest to Dornach, with the intention of meeting all five of the original executive council appointed by Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Conference 1923–1924 with the approval of the membership. One of the first persons I met on my arrival in Dornach was a young American woman by the name of Arvia MacKaye. I asked if she could help me secure an appointment with the *Vorstand* members. Arvia agreed, and in the course of the following days she helped me obtain the interviews I desired.

I met Marie Steiner in Villa Hansi, which had been her home with Rudolf Steiner. She sat me under a standing lamp and talked to me about Eugene O'Neil and the American theater. Albert Steffen met me in his apartment and talked with me about Walt Whitman. Günther Wachsmuth saw me in his office in the Goetheanum and clearly didn't want to waste much time with this young American. Ita Wegman met me in her private office at the clinic in Arlesheim. And it was in my meeting with Dr. Wegman, as well as with Dr. Elisabeth Vreede, that I experienced something of the pain and suffering that the conflicts in the society had caused them. It was also on this occasion that I experienced one of Rudolf Steiner's mystery dramas for the first time.

On leaving Dornach to return to Stuttgart, I spent the night on the island of Reichenau in Lake Constance. Three churches on this island date from the ninth century. I remember standing in one of these churchyards and realizing that the destinies that had brought the five individuals together, in

gratitude and love for Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy, had also brought them face to face with the conflicting streams that had both united and divided them in the past. What was at work here, I realized in my naïve way, went far deeper than words could convey. It would have to be lived through over the course of time.

Quaintly enough, this is exactly what happened. Two years later, after these first encounters, I met the younger sister of Arvia MacKaye and fell in love with her. Christy MacKaye was a pupil of Marie Steiner in speech formation. From Marie Steiner's perspective, Ita Wegman had forfeited any claim to esoteric respect and confidence when, after Rudolf Steiner's death, she continued to publish the "Leading Thoughts" that he had initiated for the guidance of members in their study of Anthroposophy.[1] In Frau Dr. Steiner's eyes, this was an unthinkable presumption on Dr. Wegman's part, which clearly showed a lack of sound judgment and objective self-knowledge. On the other hand, there were many members who saw in Ita Wegman's initiative the courageous act of a true esoteric pupil who recognized that there must be no interruption in the connection with the spiritual world. From the former point of view, it was obvious that the young American was under an illusion and was headed in a very wrong direction. This led to a courtship in which the young lovers earnestly studied the lecture cycle *Occult Movements of the Nineteenth Century* in a serious attempt to understand the gulf that threatened to divide them. Fortunately, love proved stronger than "correctness," and on September 5, 1939—two days after World War II began—the two "streams" were united in marriage.

The division within the society culminated with the exclusion of Ita Wegman and Elizabeth Vreede from the executive council in 1934 and 1935. The resulting divisions in the membership—in which major sections of both the Dutch and English Societies withdrew from the Goetheanum—were eventually overcome.[2] In time, the ground of mutual recognition and trust was sufficiently prepared to enable those who had felt excluded and, in many cases, had actually withdrawn, to return to the general society. By Easter 1948, this process had advanced to the point that it was possible for the annual general meeting in Dornach to rescind the act of exclusion taken in 1935, which thus opened the door to a genuine reunion of the membership. Meanwhile, both Ita Wegman and Elizabeth Vreede had passed on. In 1960, the Dutch society, under the leadership of Wilhelm Zeylmans van Emmichoven, reintegrated with the general society, headquartered at the Goetheanum. By the end of 1963, the British society, which had withdrawn in 1935, also rejoined the general society and resumed contact with the Goetheanum.

In this country, it was to a great extent the achievement of Henry Monges that the divisions in the European Movement had not been projected

automatically into the American membership. There were certainly sympathies among individuals and groups but they had not been allowed to evolve into factions and partisan positions, owing in part, of course, to distance and to a general lack of awareness. But, Monges worked hard to avoid politicization and partisanship.

Looking back on this aspect of my entry into the anthroposophical movement, I am surprised to realize how grateful I am to the fact that destiny confronted me with the challenge of trying to understand and to reconcile two apparently irreconcilable points of view in a truly human way. I certainly grew, inwardly, through this experience.

All four of Rudolf Steiner's mystery plays were scheduled for production in the coming summer of 1934, and this was an experience I did not want to miss. It had also occurred to me that an experience of working with children and young people in need of special care would strengthen and deepen the more theoretical study of my year in the teacher seminar. With this in mind, I applied to the Sonnenhof, in Arlesheim, next door to Dornach and the Goetheanum. The Sonnenhof was affiliated directly with the Arlesheim Clinic under the overall direction of Dr. Wegman. They were in need of coworkers, and I was accepted as an apprentice in training for the following autumn. The nearly six months at the Sonnenhof proved to be most valuable experience, to be highly recommended for anyone preparing to teach. It was also there that I came to know Gladys Barnett, who was destined to pioneer the anthroposophically inspired work with the retarded and handicapped in America. We became good friends over many years. It was also in the Sonnenhof that I met Drake, the retarded son of Marion and Roger Hale, with whom I later became a friend and colleague. It was during these months in Arlesheim that I received an invitation for the following spring—on my way home to America—to teach a block of main lesson history to an upper class in the New School in Streatham Hill, south of London.

The twenty-two-year-old, trained, but totally inexperienced, found himself teaching a group of seventeen-year-olds, who quickly gauged the situation and enjoyed themselves. Among them were two charming young women, whom some readers might have come to know later as Elizabeth Edmunds and Linda Nunhöfer, wife of Karl Nunhöfer, one of the very first physicians in Great Britain to practice anthroposophically extended medicine. That the young man's teaching career did not end with this first experience is a tribute to the courage and positivity of his colleagues, who proceeded to offer him the new first grade the following autumn. Although I was actually on my way home at this time, I had the feeling that it would be a good investment for my future—whatever that might be—if I were to stay longer in Europe, gain experience, and have more to bring back when

the time finally came. So, with the understanding that I could not promise to stay for eight years, I accepted what Cecil Harwood referred to as "the American Chair" and in September met my twenty-four first graders—now distinguished men and women in their early seventies. It was during my four years in Streatham that the New School rechristened itself as Michael Hall.

Meanwhile, world destiny blundered on. In 1935 the Anthroposophical Society was forbidden in Germany. On March 30, 1938 (the thirteenth anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death) the Waldorf School in Stuttgart was finally closed, after enduring a slow demise; Jewish teachers were forced to leave; there was no new first grade; parents were harassed if they refused to enroll their children in the Hitler Youth; "Heil Hitler" was to begin every lesson; and so on. Arvia and Christy MacKaye were on their way to visit their parents in Paris and shared in this sad, memorable event. The teachers each spoke to their classes, the school orchestra played, the chorus sang, and, at the end, Count Bothmer officially declared the independent Waldorf school closed by order of the National Socialist government. Arvia and Christy experienced the closing as a true festival of the human spirit. A seed of courage and hope was planted in the hearts of the thousand or so children and young people gathered in the hall, which they carried with them through the terrible years that lay ahead. The next day, a triumphant Hitler passed through Stuttgart on his return from the annexation of Austria. Standing on the steps of the Stuttgart railroad station, Arvia and Christy, looking over the heads of the crowd below, could see Hitler standing in the open touring car as he threaded his way through the crowd. Their impression: "an empty shell of a human being."

It was now the autumn of 1938. Europe trembled. I was in England, just starting to teach fourth grade. I shall never forget the experience of taking my class to Brixton Town Hall to be fitted with gas masks. What had been human faces disappeared into grotesque gargoyles. A few days later, Neville Chamberlain stepped out of the plane from Munich and proclaimed "peace in our time." The staid Londoners danced in the streets, and less than a year later World War II began.

My last responsibility in England before leaving for Dornach to be married in September was to organize and lead an international camp for young people on the coast of Wales near Carnarvon Bay. We were a group of about a hundred from twelve or thirteen different countries, including a considerable contingent from Waldorf schools in Germany. Each evening before bedtime, we formed a great circle and one of the groups sang a favorite song from their native culture, and then we sang the camp song, "In the Quest of the Holy Grail," with words by Cecil Harwood to music by Sibelius. And, not infrequently, from the Welsh village just over the rolling hills not far away, a Welsh chorus echoed in response to ours. These were magical

moments to which we listened with delight. I heard later that one of the older German campers soon found himself in a reconnaissance flight over the campsite of the previous summer as member of a Luftwaffe crew.

Hitler's invasion of Poland triggered World War II. It is one of the bitter ironies of modern history that the war began where, eighteen years before, the final effort had been made by Rudolf Steiner and his fellow "threefold" activists to awake those responsible to the need to separate all cultural spiritual life from political and economic control. If the Poles and the Germans had been able to pursue education, scientific, and artistic life, as well as religion, as independent individuals, each free to choose the cultural connections that held meaning, and the local Silesian economy had been integrated into a regional and even a global economy, leaving the two governments to guarantee the human and civil rights of their citizens, Hitler and the German nationalists would not have had to live with the perceived injustice of the 1921 referendum under the terms of the peace treaty following World War I. This perceived injustice powered their determination to right the wrongs they felt themselves to have suffered. But, at that time, the All German Party branded Steiner a traitor, and Woodrow Wilson's illusory idealism of the "self-determination" of nations pursued its fateful course—as it did also in the Balkans and elsewhere. As the history books now tell us, on September 1, 1939, the German army—one and a half million strong—crossed the border and invaded Poland. Two days later, England and France declared war, and World War II had begun.

It was Sunday evening, September third. On the hillside above Dornach, men and women, members of the Anthroposophical Society, climbed the hill to the Goetheanum to hear Albert Steffen speak. From the Goetheanum terrace, they could look north, across the Rhine Valley, to the German Black Forest and west, across the open plain, to the Vosges Mountains of France. Here, in the northwest corner of Switzerland, where the city of Basel has suburbs in both Germany and France, it was clear to everyone that the German armies might try to circumvent the Maginot Line of French fortifications and invade France. If this were to happen, this corner of Switzerland was the more likely of the only two roads they could take. The crowd gathered silently and somberly in the Great Hall of the Goetheanum, and Steffen spoke:

> Even if we ourselves should be swept away, let us create things of such permanence that they will survive without us. Let us not fool ourselves by thinking that the war began today, nor that it will end with any so-called peace treaty—unless the world finds its way to ideas that are the source of genuine social reconstruction in accordance with the facts of economic, political, and spiritual reality.[3]

Two days later, Christy MacKaye and Henry Barnes were married in Christy's father's house, with Albert Steffen as a guest. Marion MacKaye, Christy's mother, had died that spring, on June 1 in St. Germain-en-Laye, outside of Paris, where she and Percy had come to visit Gordon Craig. Following Marion's death, Percy returned to Dornach to be with Arvia and Christy and among caring friends.

In the mysterious language of life, it was to be exactly a year, to the day, from the death of Marion MacKaye in St. Germain-en-Laye that Percy MacKaye and his family—Christy and Henry then united in marriage—with Henry's younger brother Alfred sailed from Genoa on the last American ship to leave the Mediterranean, landing in New York ten days later on the day Italy declared war. The year that intervened was one of world destiny.

For Percy MacKaye it was a year of inner and outer transformation. His friendship as a poet with Albert Steffen was a source of strength and courage and creative peace. They had come to know each other during the earlier sojourns of Percy and Marion in Dornach from 1936 to 1938. Out of their first acquaintance, a deepening friendship ripened. This came to expression in their mutual volume of inter-translated poems: *In Another Land: Im Andern Land*,[4] about which Percy MacKaye had written:

> Steffen's language is often as though carved in granite. It is architectural, crystalline, and yet it can have the delicacy and enchantment of a flower. English just can't really capture that same character. Each language is actually a world in itself, and translation is not just traveling from one country to another by ship or train. It is like being born anew "in another land."[5]

The year following Marion MacKaye's death was, for Percy, a year of immense creative poetic life, culminating in the volume, *My Lady Dear, Arise: Songs and Sonnets in Remembrance of Marion Morse MacKaye.*[6]

From the moment of his first arrival in Dornach in October 1936, Percy MacKaye had not only received a powerful impression of the Goetheanum building, but had recognized its unique cultural significance as a world center for the arts, for science, and philosophy. This recognition moved him especially because it had been the lifelong ideal of his own father, the actor-playwright Steele MacKaye, with which Percy had lived as he grew up. Percy MacKaye expressed his impression of the Goetheanum, both as a unique work of architecture and as a cultural center in an article published in the *New York Times* in 1936, from which the following passage is quoted:

> The Goetheanum building rises boldly majestical from the wide hill-ridge, where its rhythmic, cliff-like escarpments of gray, catching all colors and shadowings of day-shine, storm and twilight, simulate the contours of cloud and mountain background, like some massive

> feature of nature's own organism. Nor is this likeness haphazard, for its grandiose design is subtly a conscious element of the whole organic structure of art and philosophy, akin to the poet Goethe's concept of nature, which the late Rudolf Steiner has interpreted and revealed in thousands of personal researches, lectures and essays, published by the society of which Steffen today is the leading spokesman.[7]

It is remarkable that, just in these darkening years leading up to World War II, when Anthroposophy was banned from its native Germany, an American poet and dramatist found a kindred soul in a German-speaking Swiss poet. And the Swiss poet found hope in America. Steffen wrote in his diary on December 10, 1936, (his birthday):

> The happiest birthday present: Percy MacKaye's article concerning me, which builds a bridge to America. This poet gives me hope that America will become a home for spiritual science.
>
> If the Goetheanum should be destroyed by Germany, then it should rise again in America. It is strangely interesting that a poet should be helpful in this regard, one who sets out from a patriarchal aspect (in his history of an epoch, he describes the life of his father), but who imbues his family, his nation and his continent with world culture, in direct contrast to what is now happening in Germany.... Through him I have learned to love America." (Ibid., p. 72)

The eerie unreality of the first nine months of World War II, the so-called Phony War, played itself out. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, and Norway were overrun and occupied. The unholy German pact with Russia and the subsequent Russian invasion of Finland took their course. The sword of Damocles still hung over Switzerland: Which road will Hitler take to Paris and the conquest of France? The relative quiet was uncanny. It was the stillness before the storm.

Then, in early May, word spread like wildfire that German troops were massed on the northern border of Switzerland. The invasion, it seemed, was imminent. Arvia MacKaye wrote:

> Overnight, thousands of Swiss troops, with battle equipment, poured into the area. Roads were clogged and blocked with them everywhere, and soldiers occupied a large portion of the Goetheanum as a military base. Within a matter of hours, we found ourselves in the midst of a fortified encampment on the brink of combat. Word spread that all older people, women and children should leave as swiftly as possible.... We worked at such a pace and at such a high pitch of tension that I can no longer remember how everything was finally managed and arranged for, or just how long it took. But one picture stands out unforgettably in my mind. At the last instant, so it seems to me,

> after having said goodbye to a few dear friends who were remaining, I went down to say a last farewell to Albert Steffen and to take him a message from my father.
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> There was only time to speak a few words with him. Then he accompanied me to the doorstep, and I shall never forget the look on his face as I said goodbye. He stood there, a gaunt, motionless figure, as though the weight of ages had descended upon him, and all that lay ahead, in fact and possibility, had frozen his powerful features with an expression of overwhelming grief. In his eyes I seemed to glimpse the whole war, which was to come, and in his gentle handclasp felt all the helpful thought and concern which he sent with us. And as I turned again in the pathway to look back, as though in some unbelievable dream—still he stood there, a motionless pillar of insight, suffering and immense compassion.[8]

Percy MacKaye, Arvia, her brother Robin, and Henry's brother, Alfred, made their way to Montreux, in French Switzerland. They were fortunate to secure rooms in a small hotel high above Lake Geneva. Rumor had it that Mussolini had intervened and persuaded Hitler to take the northern route, and, on May 10, the rumors were confirmed when the German armies forced their way through the Netherlands and were pouring down into France. Passage could still be booked on the S.S. Manhattan, sailing from Genoa on June 1. Henry and Christy joined the family in Montreux. On their way there from Basel, Christy was able to visit Marie Steiner in Beatenberg in the Swiss mountains—where she had taken refuge—and received a diploma in the art of speech formation from her. Not wanting to be trapped in Italy if war were to be declared before they left, the MacKaye-Barnes family crossed the border on May 31. Arvia describes the final departure from Europe:

> Filled with a sense of awe and deep thanksgiving that Switzerland and the Goetheanum, with its spiritual treasure, had been spared—we set off for Genoa. There, exactly one year after the day on which my mother died, we embarked upon another voyage, outward bound for that so long familiar, yet now so new, land of our birth. ... The SS *Manhattan*—laden to capacity with an extraordinary assortment of passengers, who slept on cots in the ballroom, theater, and even on the decks, and told all manner of tales of adventure and escape—made its way by a southerly route in order, hopefully, to avoid mine-infested waters, and finally arrived without mishap at the shores of the western hemisphere, entering the harbor of New York. And on the very day of its arrival, Italy declared war.[9]