

Opening of the First Waldorf School (September 1919)

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), a lifestyle reformer and new-age pioneer, launched an experimental educational system in 1919 in response to a request from the head of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette company in Stuttgart, Emil Molt, to establish a school for the children of his employees. His system has grown over the ensuing century to include thousands of schools and kindergartens across the globe, one of the world's most influential independent school movements. Steiner conceived of his Waldorf school as a corrective to the disciplinary tradition in German pedagogy, and his students spent a lot of time in creative activities and improvisational play, an approach that emerged out of both the school's hurried opening and Steiner's educational philosophy. He encouraged children to first engage their hands, then their hearts, and then their brains, with the aim of guiding them to the "etheric world" of their pre-birth. Waldorf students immersed themselves in a form of expressive movement known as "eurythmy" at an early age, for instance, but they might not learn to read until the second or third grade. Pictured here is the two-page program for the first Waldorf school's opening celebration in Stuttgart. In addition to poetry readings and speeches, it also included a eurythmic performance.

Source



Source: Program for the opening ceremony of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, 1919. Archiv der Freien Waldorfschule Uhlandshöhe. In: Dietrich Esterl, *Emil Molt, 1876-1936. Tun, was gefordert ist.* Stuttgart: Mayer Verlag, 2012, p. 102-103.

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