

# Ita Wegman Institute

for Basic Research into Anthroposophy



House of Ita Wegman, designed by Rudolf Steiner in 1924

# ITA WEGMAN INSTITUT

FÜR ANTHROPOSOPHISCHE GRUNDLAGENFORSCHUNG

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Das Ita Wegman Institut ist als gemeinnütziger Verein mit wissenschaftlich-sozialer Zielsetzung anerkannt.

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Arlesheim, 4. March 2021

Dear Friends

Along with this email we are sending you the correspondence and documents that were circulated this year to the members of the International Circle of Friends and Supporters of our institute and archive on the occasion of Ita Wegman's 145<sup>th</sup> birthday (22 February 1876 –

4 March 1943) and the centenary of the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute she founded in Arlesheim in 1921. We have had the impression that it would be important to broaden the circle of recipients this year—in light of the Clinic's centenary but also because Ita Wegman means a great deal to many people around the world, and her being and work can offer strength and courage for the future in difficult times—strength and courage we all need.

We have also been thinking that there may be more anthroposophical friends around the world who are interested in our work in Arlesheim, in the Ita Wegman Archive, as well as in our research and publication activity that has been connected with the General Anthroposophical Section of the School for Spiritual Science (Goetheanum) since 2020. Our home, Ita Wegman's wooden house (that Rudolf Steiner co-designed and planned during 1924) is situated on the clinic grounds. Here we endeavor to cultivate for the future Wegman's therapeutic intentions and her foundational work in collaboration with Rudolf Steiner—and to share them with the world. Thus, a number of years ago, with the support of the clinic and a few friends, we created this workplace and set out to develop it; this included adding its own publishing house. Gunhild Pörksen and Mirela Faldey oversee the Ita Wegman Archive, which is open to the public; Felicitas Graf manages the Institute's office and is co-responsible for the publishing house; Matthias Mochner and Heike Gross are primarily involved with our ongoing research into the theme of anthroposophical medicine, curative education, and pharmaceuticals in the time of German National Socialism (1933-1945), which is currently the focus of our scholarly research. Julia Selg is active in the editing aspect of our publishing house.

We would be very happy if there were even more people internationally who accompany and support our work, who share our ideals and—to the extent possible—contribute financial support as well. Members of the International Circle of Friends receive an annual mailing for Ita Wegman's birthday that includes the Institute's report on the work accomplished and its publications. Throughout the year members will also be notified about our newly published books as well as new discoveries made in the course of our work. Some members of the Circle of Friends are also engaged in translating our published works into languages beyond German and in the distribution of new books. We would like to expand this network in the future and keep more people informed by electronic means.

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For these reasons, we have decided to share this 2021 annual report much more widely than in the past—and thus it has found its way to you as well! If you would like to become a part of the Circle of Friends and receive our electronic mailings in the future, you can write to Leonhard Schuster, a member of our Circle, at [freundeskreis@wegmaninstitut.ch](mailto:freundeskreis@wegmaninstitut.ch); he will add your name to our list. There are no further obligations; the Circle of Friends of the Ita Wegman Institute e.V. is a non-profit association, registered in Germany and Switzerland. It would be wonderful if you would consider making an annual contribution of any size that would help to make possible our continuing work—but everyone is very welcome regardless. We will not share your email address with anyone else. It will be used solely for correspondence with the Circle of Friends.

And now—we hope you enjoy reading this year's report!

With warm greetings from Arlesheim,

Peter Selg

#### Contributions via PayPal

Contributions to support the work of the Ita Wegman Institute for Fundamental Anthroposophical Research, e.V. can be sent via PayPal to [sekretariat@wegmaninstitut.ch](mailto:sekretariat@wegmaninstitut.ch)

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Arlesheim, 22. February 2021

Dear Members of Our Ita Wegman Institute's International Circle of Friends and Supporters!

On the occasion of Ita Wegman's birthday—her 145<sup>th</sup>!—we send you our most cordial greetings from our home in the Holzhaus (the timber house) in Arlesheim, and a report of our work during the past year as well as of our current projects. We have also included something special for you.

In the archive, Mirela Faldey has begun to scan all of the original photographs of Ita Wegman and to preserve them using optimal conservation materials; work is also underway to archivally conserve Ita Wegman's original manuscripts and documents. She has also begun to create a digital inventory of our archival holdings as the basis for creating an overarching timeline of Ita Wegman's life and work; the creation of this inventory will continue over the next years. This includes the special collection of Ita Wegman's letters from the last years of her life which will be part of the final chapter of our continuing study of the period of National Socialism, *Anthroposophische Medizin, Heilpädagogik und Pharmazie in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus 1933-1945* [Anthroposophical medicine, curative education, and pharmaceuticals during the time of National Socialism – 1933- 1945]. In addition, Mirela Faldey is creating a digital photo archive of images from Ita Wegman's life and work; she is responsible for inquiries about this aspect as well.— Together we decided that during 2021, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute Arlesheim, we would bring out a comprehensive publication in both German and English: *Ita Wegman and the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute Arlesheim – A Photographic Documentation*. It should be available for order at the latest by 8 June 2021!

We are more than pleased to report that the previously announced book by Julia Selg and Christiaan Struelens about Hans Memling of Bruges' St. John Altarpiece appeared in print at the beginning of this year. It is entitled *Der Johannes-Altar von Hans Memling, Betrachtung eines therapeutischen Kunstwerks* [The St. John altarpiece by Hans Memling, Observations on a therapeutic work of art]. A small copy of this altarpiece had hung in Ita Wegman's consultation room. This monograph, a collaboration between an art historian and a priest of the Christian Community, succeeds in making evident—or at least in making the case for—why it was this triptych that hung in the space where Ita Wegman conducted consultations. It is a significant contribution to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first course for doctors in Dornach (1920) and the first two anthroposophical clinics in Arlesheim and Stuttgart (1921). We would highly recommend it, and we encourage you—as members of the Circle of Friends—to take it to heart.

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We would invite you to peruse the attached flyer for information about the other works that have made their way into the world from the Holzhaus in Arlesheim since 22 February 2020. In it you will see that on the one hand we had to confront current challenges and controversies (*Rudolf Steiner, die Anthroposophie und der Rassismusvorwurf* [Rudolf Steiner, anthroposophy, and the accusation of racism]; *Das Mysterium der Erde, Aufsätze zur Corona-Zeit* [The Mystery of the Earth, Essays on the time of Corona]; *Zivilcourage: Die Herausforderung freier Waldorfschulen* [Civic courage: the challenge of free Waldorf schools]. On the other hand, we also brought out volumes on the spiritual foundations of anthroposophy and its medical-social initiatives (*Die Zukunft der Erde—Franz von Assisi, die Rosenkreuzer, und die Anthroposophie* [The future of the earth—Francis of Assisi, the Rosicrucians, and anthroposophy]; *Der Untergang des Abendlandes? Rudolf Steiners Auseinandersetzung mit Oswald Spengler* [The downfall of the west? Rudolf Steiner's dispute with Oswald Spengler]; *Apokalypse—Vom Weg zur "Ewigen Stadt"* [Apocalypse—On the path to the "Eternal City"]; *Die Sprache des Hüters* [The language of the Guardian]. In collaboration with Peter Barna, a comprehensive work about Rudolf Steiner's first course for doctors was published during the spring as part of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the course, and was published by the Verlag am Goetheanum. The book is part of a scholarly project undertaken by the University of Witten-Herdecke, the Medical Section at the Goetheanum, and the Rudolf Steiner Archive (Peter Selg and Peter Barna, eds.): *Vorgeschichte, Intentionen und Komposition: Materiellen zum ersten Ärztekurs Rudolf Steiners* [Background, intentions, and configuration: Materials about Rudolf Steiner's first course for doctors.]

Additional highlights were events with Brigitte Kowarik for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Paul Celan (for the occasion the Verlag des Ita Wegman Instituts, the Institutes' publishing house, also reprinted our earlier study of Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs)—as well as the brilliant annual conference of the Medical Section at the Goetheanum during September 2020. An international initiative group of younger doctors had prepared the conference over the course of a year using Rudolf Steiner's three "bridge" lectures as the focus for the inner forming of the gathering. We were especially pleased that they engaged the Verlag des Ita Wegman Institut to publish these three lectures in a particularly beautiful edition and in multiple languages.

In the area of scholarship, the studies about National Socialism require all of our forces. Some initial results of this project flowed into the book on "racism;" the monograph *Nach Auschwitz—Auseinandersetzungen um die Zukunft der Medizin* [After Auschwitz—discussions about the future of medicine] can be included in this context. During the coming years, the study itself will appear in several comprehensive volumes, and intensive preparation continues—despite difficult conditions and circumstances.

Because many lectures and seminars were cancelled during the corona crisis, the Institute's income from such activity experienced a decline. We would be grateful for financial contributions to make possible publication of the comprehensive volume of photos of Ita Wegman and the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute, the archive's recent implementation of optimal, archive-quality materials, and our scholarly study of anthroposophical medicine, curative education, and pharmaceuticals during the period of National Socialism.



We would like to develop our circle of international friends and our circle of support further—which led us to think about sending this annual report electronically (rather than by post) and to a larger group of people—in hopes of reaching an even wider circle of friends around the world. For almost twenty years, the Ita Wegman Institute and its archive have dedicated themselves to a reappraisal of Ita Wegman's work, her intentions, and her legacy—which are and remain vitally important. Their effect is more relevant than ever. The connection to her being, as an individuality, is important and can be a great help in difficult times.

This year, as a small surprise from the Holzhaus, we are including a report dated 23 June 1935 from one of Ita Wegman's notebooks; it concerns the founding and opening of the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute, and is prefaced by an introduction by Gunhild Pörksen. We have also included a special photograph of Ita Wegman from her student days, a gift to the Archive from Christine Ruckstuhl. This photograph was produced on salt paper using an unusual complex historical process and (thanks to a donation) was properly and professionally preserved during January 2021. (See illustration 1)

We thank the Klinik Arlesheim for the possibility of continuing our work in Ita Wegman's Holzhaus; Angelika and Leonhard Schuster for their dedicated commitment on behalf of the International Circle of Friends; Marguerite and Prof. Douglas Miller for their translations into English; and Gene Gollogly († 1.20.2021), for his tireless commitment to the publication and distribution of our books in the USA and worldwide.

Furthermore, we offer all of you—the members of the Circle of Friends—our heartfelt thanks for all your interest in and support of our work in Arlesheim. And we wish you much strength and confident optimism for 2021!

Peter Selg, Julia Selg, Felicitas Graf, Gunhild Pörksen, Mirela Faldey, Heike Gross, Matthias Mochner



Illustration 1. Photograph of Ita Wegman from her student days in Zurich, 1906-1911



June 1935

10.

Heute <sup>wollen</sup> ~~haben~~ wir 2 Erinnerungstage <sup>feiern</sup>  
Vor 14 Jahr<sup>en</sup> <sup>an 6. Juni</sup> wurde die Klinik  
eröffnet und setzte R. St. zum ersten  
mal seinen Fuß in der Klinik.

Dieser Tag haben wir innerlich immer  
als Feiertag betrachtet.

<sup>seine 40. Geburtstag</sup>  
Zugleich hat Hr. v. Deventer  
~~an diesem Tag~~ Geburtstag, und ich  
nenne diese beiden Erinnerungstage  
zusammen, und finde es schön sie  
zusammen zu feiern, deshalb will  
Hr. dr. v. Deventer zu denjenigen gehört  
die stark mit der Klinik ver wachsen  
ist und Lieb und Leid dieser  
Klinik stets mutig mitgetragen hat.  
Ich möchte Ihnen nun an diesem  
Tage ein Bild geben von der Arbeit  
der Klinik nach ihrer Entstehung.

Vor kurzer Zeit, ~~das war noch~~ durfte  
ich Ihnen ein Bild geben von der  
Entstehung der Klinik.

Sie wissen der Kern dieser Klinik  
war ein winzig kleines Häuschen  
von 5 Zimmern mit dem mächtigen  
Apfelbaum davor. Und dass es dieser



Ita Wegman's report on June 23, 1935 about the beginnings of the Clinic and the beginnings of the anthroposophical medical movement is contained in one of her notebooks, NB 89, a lined, student's exercise book with a blue cardboard cover. In the booklet are a pair of entries written in pencil, but she wrote this text in ink, and it is readily apparent that she did so in one go—13 pages with an energetic stroke of the pen to end the entry.

She announces, so to speak, that memories of two events should be celebrated together on this June day: one is the day on which the Clinic was opened and Rudolf Steiner set foot in it for the first time. Since then this day has been “inwardly” a day of celebration! It can be seen in the manuscript that Ita Wegman had subsequently entered the date of this “day of celebration” and is a bit irritated. It states, “on 6 June the clinic was opened ...” Had she made a slip of the pen? Not remembered correctly? We do not know. In fact, the KTI—the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute—was actually opened two days later, on 8 June 1921.

The other occasion is contemporary—on this 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, Madeleine van Deventer's 36<sup>th</sup> birthday was to be celebrated, the doctor who is so strongly “intertwined” with the clinic, and who helps to carry it. In NB89, Ita Wegman had decided and written down—perhaps on the day before?—that she wanted to “offer a picture” on this doubly festive day, “of the clinic's work since its inception.” Could we imagine anything better for this centenary?

She reports about the past 14 years. More than 30 people are actually named—often briefly and humorously—and characterized affectionally. Ita Wegman did not speak about the clinic's buildings, the tight finances, the difficulties endured, or about herself; she spoke about the people who came to the clinic in order to learn, to build something, to test for themselves the impulses of this new extended medicine, to elaborate it and take it up in their work as doctors and nurses and socially. She reports colorfully, filled with content and enthusiasm, about how the clinic—founded through Rudolf Steiner—was also built on and lives from the collaboration, the dedication, and the therapeutic imagination of these many colleagues. So much of what is invested in anthroposophical medicine was tested and transformed in this clinic. For example, it is difficult to imagine the actual diversity of the therapies that were worked out and put into practice there. And, out of her highly realistic and highly spiritual being, Ita Wegman possessed the gift, the talent, to include people and ideas, to give them space, and encourage their becoming active.

Enjoy reading her words!

On behalf of the Ita Wegman Archive,  
Gunhild Pörksen

Ita Wegman  
23 June 1935, Notebook 89

Today we want to celebrate two remembrance days. Fourteen years ago, on 6 June, the Clinic was opened and Rudolf Steiner set foot in it for the first time. We have inwardly always viewed this as a day of celebration.

Today, 23 June, is Frl. von Deventer's birthday. I mention these two days of remembrance together and find it lovely to celebrate them together because Frl. von Deventer is among those who are strongly intertwined with the clinic, and with love and suffering have always courageously co-carried this Clinic. Today I would like to offer you a picture of the Clinic's work since its inception.

You know that the seed for this clinic was a tiny five-room little house with a mighty apple tree in the front yard, and that it was this apple tree that enticed me to purchase it. From the five-room little house came a 20-room clinic to the great astonishment of the residents of the village of Arlesheim, who had never experienced anything like it.

The doctors in this clinic were Frl. Dr. Walter and I. At the time, my practice was in Basel. The nurse in charge was nurse Käte, along with an assistant. The office was run by Frl. Mien Viehoff. Thus we began. All of the rooms were immediately engaged and prepared. And soon we required more help. Nurse Hedwig Walter arrived then. In order to free up Dr. Walter, Dr. Glas (who is now in Gnadenwald) came. At the time he was a shy young doctor who was nevertheless very talented and highly esteemed by Dr. Steiner. Dr. Steiner was personally very strongly interested in the development of our clinic. He visited us very often, always gave a lot of advice, and from it arose actual anthroposophical medicine. Medicaments had to be produced and Dr. Schmiedel, who was active in Dornach producing pigments for paintings in the First Goetheanum, cleared out a small corner for the production of the first medicaments. These relationships were very primitive and almost no one then would believe their eyes to see the large building that we see now where the medicaments are made, present-day Weleda. Soon a house could be purchased for the production of the medicaments, nota bene the house next to Weleda where our colleagues now live. The initiative arose from the clinic and Rudolf Steiner founded the whole course on remedies because everything was there that he required.

Thus passed the years 1921 to 1922. (Sylvester 1922, burning of the Goetheanum.)

In August 1922 Dr. Bockholt arrived at the clinic. Dr. Walter was ill then. Sylvester '22, the Goetheanum burned. Despite this loss the work everywhere intensified. 1922-23 the work with Dr. Steiner in the field of medicine became very intensive. The clinic was always busy, and stood very much at the center of anthroposophical life because Dr. Steiner visited it nearly every day.— Dr. Sigfrid Knauer worked here for a short time.

Life in Dornach was very intense because on weekends—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday—Rudolf Steiner gave his lectures and these were like a wellspring of life for us, carrying all of us and always evoking enthusiasm. The whole week was a sustained joy and at the end of the week we pilgrimaged up there, forgot our weariness and listened to a beautiful lecture, then pilgrimaged back down, refreshed again. What happiness prevailed among people, how connected we were with one another. Dr. Steiner's vast, comprehensive knowledge about heavenly and earthly wisdom allowed no other feeling to arise in people than gratitude at being allowed to hear of this knowledge. We can genuinely speak about a paradisaical atmosphere at that time. But even such an atmosphere cannot endure. Indeed, Rudolf Steiner warned often enough that we ought to be awake. From those to whom much is given, much is also expected—he was able to say that often and very earnestly. The burning of the Goetheanum was the first warning. Rudolf Steiner increased his activity during 1923-24. An unimaginable amount of work was done by him, and we followed as best we could. The medical work was not only here but in Stuttgart. And also abroad, the nuclei, the seeds for a medical movement were planted, for example in London, England, in the Hague, in Vienna.

The clinic was expanded with the addition of the Sonnenhof. The children were not yet there, adults were admitted to the Sonnenhof, and the director was Dr. Bockholt. Some children were already in the Holle, which we set up as a home for children.

Meanwhile, the medical course was being given, the curative education course. The first institute for curative education was founded in Lauenstein near Jena. At the same time the childrens' home in the Holle with 4-5 children. Dr. Bort, who was first to go to Lauenstein, was asked to come here by Dr. Steiner. In her place, Dr. Ilse Knauer was to tend to Lauenstein. The clinic, the Sonnenhof, Holle, Weleda (at the time it was called the International Laboratories) evolved. Dr. Ilse Knauer joined in. Dr. Hardt was requested for Lauenstein. Everywhere you could sense an intensive effort for the medical work, Dr. Steiner and I worked on the medical book. An abrupt end—the onset of Rudolf Steiner's illness. A completely different situation entered. I left the clinic to care for Dr. Steiner, had no idea of the difficult things that might happen. Rudolf Steiner's long illness from September 1924 to March 1925 kept me far apart from the clinic since it was the wish of Rudolf Steiner that I help and support him in the work that he had to do. He established himself in the atelier; I slept in an adjacent room.

It was a beautiful but very, very difficult time. From those to whom much is given, much is expected. I was reminded of these words time and again. They always stood before me and I could bear the difficulties that came towards me after Rudolf Steiner's death. Advancing the entire medical movement was a necessity. It had begun and must be completed. Magerstädt, Schickler worked at the clinic. Dr. van Deventer arrived in 1925. The peculiar situation arose that the female doctors would stay and male colleagues would stay for only a brief time, then leave to start a practice. The doctors who were here continuously were Drs. Walter, Bockholt, Knauer, Bort, and van Deventer. Periodically we would jokingly be called the Amazon women. There came a time when male help arrived and connected with our work. The young Suchantke, who at the time worked in a clinic in Breslau, had a dream. He dreamt that one day I said to Dr. Bockholt that we must have a man otherwise, the work of the clinic will not continue. He found that he could be that man, got in touch, and appeared in 1926. He was a young and dear doctor. When Dr. Steiner



of him, he used to call him our dear Suchantke. I worked a lot and in a practical way with Dr. Suchantke. He knew everything theoretically; he was still lacking in practice. I recall how I taught him massage on a government minister from Belgrade. He had a childlike pride in being given the opportunity to care for the minister as a patient and massaged him so forcefully that, after working on him, he was always bathed in sweat. He had to learn to make compresses; and once he was utterly astonished when I swabbed with pure lemon juice the entire throat of a child suspected of having diphtheria, and also placed drops of lemon juice in the child's nose—and then could experience for himself that the child was really healed despite having received no serum. Suchantke was an enthusiastic doctor, happy only when he had patients in his hands.—Meanwhile, the clinic had to be expanded because it no longer sufficed. It then took on its current form. While this was taking place, some of our patients had to be moved out and we rented a house in Figino in Tessin for our patients. Nurse Käte and Dr. Knauer went with these patients; later Annie Viehoff and Stavenhagen went as well. Here I must still tell how Kirchner came to us. In 1925 Kirchner wrote to me that he felt inwardly called to work with the clinic. Dr. Steiner said so to him in a dream. And although he had work in Berlin that he found completely satisfying, he nevertheless had the desire to come to Arlesheim to work with us.

During 1926 an enormous amount took place. Expanding the clinic, many doctors coming and going. Dr. Linder (now in America) worked for a short time in the clinic. Dr. Kern, Dr. König. From Vienna, Dr. Deutsch. From Holland, Hugenholtz [Sleswijk]. From Germany, Mothes, Solti, Gottschewski. Santos from Portugal. Dr. Kaelin came. Dr. Hauschka. Medical courses were given for the medical practitioners and the young physicians; those who jointly organized these courses were Dr. Friedel Schmidt and Alex Leroi. You see how karma works. Now they are here and continue that they had begun.

Later we divided the work so that conferences were given for the doctors and courses for the medical practitioners. A group of young physicians formed and faithfully gathered 2X per year here in Arlesheim. A number of these young medical practitioners have now become doctors. Already in 1925 we began regular courses for nurses. Institutes for curative education were gradually created. In Germany, Holland, England.

The medical movement was being established everywhere. It was a breakthrough, but at the same time opposition also set in. The period of opposition is very strongly present, it can become so strong that our forces will not suffice to overcome these undermining and retarding forces. But the help is also great, the beautiful work of Drs. Kaelin, Dr. Hauschka, the courses by Drs. Bockholt, Stavenhagen, Pracht, the work of the Sonnenhof, the institutes that so courageously continue everywhere, doctors everywhere who are faithfully advancing Rudolf Steiner's work despite the difficult conditions. These are all rays of light that allow us to gaze into the future filled with hope and also give us justification to see the future with confidence.

Note: After transcribing this entry from Ita Wegman's notebook and comparing it with Emanuel Zeylmans' previous transcription, several abbreviations were written out and a couple small "errors" cautiously rectified.