

Date: Tue, 11 Nov 2003 14:27:56 -0000
Reply-To: NEWS from NNA <NNA-NEWS@LISTSERV.ANTH.ORG>
Sender: NEWS from NNA <NNA-NEWS@LISTSERV.ANTH.ORG>
From: Christian von Arnim <Christian@CVA-COMMUNICATIONS.COM>
Subject: Last-ditch attempt to stop fusion of anthroposophical societies
Content-Type: multipart/alternative;

Copyright 2003 News Network Anthroposophy Limited. All rights reserved.
The following material may be republished without the prior consent of
News Network Anthroposophy. News Network Anthroposophy does, however,
require acknowledgement of the source and, if provided, the author of
the material.

+ + + + +

NNA-N E W S

Last-ditch attempt to stop fusion of anthroposophical societies

By Christian von Arnim

Dornach, 11 November (NNA) - A group of activists opposed to plans to
merge the General Anthroposophical Society (GAS) with the newly
reactivated Anthroposophical Society (Foundation Meeting) - the
so-called Foundation Meeting Society - has made a last ditch attempt to
stop the planned fusion of the two entities.

An extraordinary general meeting has been specifically called by the GAS
executive council for 15 and 16 November to approve the fusion of the
two societies and empower the council to go ahead with such a move at
the appropriate time.

In a two-pronged attempt to put the fusion on hold until the substantive
claim against the merger plans of the GAS is finally settled in court,
the nine-member "Group for the Renewal and Defence of the
Anthroposophical Society" has launched a further legal challenge asking
the local court in Dornach-Thierstein to rule that the Anthroposophical
Society should refrain from all further action in this respect until the
outcome of the substantive hearing early next year is known.

According to the court, its decision as to whether it will grant such an
interim injunction is likely to be announced by tomorrow (Wednesday)
evening.

The GAS has told NNA that it is waiting for the ruling on the interim
injunction before saying what its next moves will be. However, a letter
commenting on the legal action from the executive council to the general
secretaries of national anthroposophical societies and national
representatives expressed confidence that the extraordinary general
meeting would go ahead.

If this latest legal challenge should fail, the opposition group has put
forward two resolutions for the forthcoming extraordinary general
meeting this coming weekend calling for the fusion to be debated but for
a decision to be delayed until the substance of its claim against the
GAS is finally settled in court.

In an interview in the most recent edition of the journal "Das
Goetheanum", executive council member Paul Mackay, who acts as spokesman
on the constitutional issue for the council, said the reason why the
society had decided not to wait for the substantive judgement was that,
having approved the reactivation of the foundation meeting society at
the general meeting in December 2002, members should be given a chance
in advance of the main court hearing to voice their opinion on the
fusion as well.

It was important for the executive council to know now whether it had
the full support of the membership in its chosen course, Mackay said.

Although opponents initially managed to put the fusion plans on hold with their successful court action almost a year ago, an appeal by the GAS reversed that decision on the grounds that there was no basis for the injunction in Swiss law. A series of further actions by opposition activists right up to the Swiss supreme court failed to reverse that decision of the appeal court, leaving the GAS executive council free to proceed with its fusion plans.

The dispute over the fusion plans has been ongoing since March 2002, when the council of the General Anthroposophical Society announced its far-reaching constitutional plans to restructure the society with the intention of resolving long-standing issues connected with its disputed constitutional status and making its legal position more transparent.

The constitutional debate revolves around the issue whether or not the society re-founded by Rudolf Steiner as the General Anthroposophical Society at the Christmas conference of 1923 to be the vehicle for the spiritual tasks of anthroposophy - the Foundation Meeting Society -still legally exists or whether it disappeared through merger with the original, administrative Johannes Building Association which was also renamed the General Anthroposophical Society on 8 February 1925.

At the end of December 2002, 1,600 members from all over the world adopted with an overwhelming majority the amended statutes of the Foundation Meeting Society of 1923, thus reactivating it, despite vociferous opposition from a small group of protestors.

ENDS

+ + + + +

Item reference number: N031111-01EN
Date: 11 November 2003

More NNA reports at: <http://www.nna-news.org/content/>