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Subject: Interim injunction halts moves to renew General Anthroposophical Society

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NNA-N E W S

Interim injunction halts moves to renew General Anthroposophical Society

By Christian von Arnim

Dornach, 13 February (NNA) - The endeavours of the executive council of the General Anthroposophical Society (GAS) to create a "healthy constitutional basis for the further development of the General Anthroposophical Society" has suffered an initial setback in the courts.

The dispute revolves around the legality of the resolution adopted at the most recent extraordinary members' meeting in Dornach at the end of December 2002 to reactivate the so-called "foundation meeting society" which was founded at the 1923 Christmas conference.

Opponents of the move had applied to the court in Dornach to put a halt to the process and the court has now granted an interim injunction preventing the newly reactivated foundation meeting society from undertaking any legal transactions until the result of the main hearing is known.

The injunction means that the fusion of the GAS with the foundation meeting society which was intended to take place at the annual general meeting at Easter 2003 will have to be postponed.

The GAS executive council has not yet taken a decision as to whether to appeal the interim injunction, which concerns procedural matters rather than the substantive case, but appears to be taking a rather relaxed view of the situation.

"I see it like this, that the judge decided he needed more time and such an interim injunction has to be decided very quickly. If he had refused the injunction, we would have gone ahead with the fusion and created a new set of circumstances," Paul Mackay, member of the executive council, told NNA.

With regard to the substantive case itself of the reactivation of the foundation meeting society and its fusion with the GAS, Mackay said: "We did not propose this course of action to the members on a whim but because on the basis of legal opinion we hold the view: this will work. It is important to us to take the events of the Christmas conference seriously not just on the level of ideas but also to give them proper legal standing. That is what we are doing now."

"That is why people are able to challenge the process in the courts. Because we take it seriously in terms of its legal standing it has now come before a judge," Mackay added.

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 fusion with the original, administrative Johannes Building Association which was also renamed the General Anthroposophical Society on 8 February 1925.

Since the two bodies were intended to perform quite different functions, the issue which of them is represented by the current General Anthroposophical Society - and thus the issue whether the foundation meeting society still exists - is of fundamental relevance to both the membership and its leading organs.

At the end of December, 1,600 members from all over the world adopted with a clear majority the amended statutes of the foundation meeting of 1923 despite vociferous opposition from a small group of protestors

against the move.

This decision had created the appropriate legal basis for the worldwide movement to safeguard its cohesion and work, the GAS said in a statement in early January. The statutes adopted at the foundation meeting in 1923 had been given renewed validity in their amended form. The amended version allowed for an appropriate leadership style for the present time: the executive council led the world society in collaboration with the general secretaries of the national societies and the persons responsible for the School of Spiritual Science, the statement said.

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