

Reto Andrea Savoldelli

On the Reconstitution of the General Anthroposophical Society. A finite story with an occult background

Since the draft text for the renewal of the statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society was announced by the Goetheanum Executive Council at its last annual general meeting, hundreds of members around the world have responded to its invitation to comment on the draft during an initial consultation round. They felt compelled to do so by the Society's Executive Council's intention to have the so-called 'reorganisation' take 'legal effect' in the near future at the next Annual General Meeting. Consequently, many people, particularly in European countries, worked individually or in groups to develop a vision for the Society – founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1923 – that they could find acceptable for the coming decades and to which they could give their personal approval. For most, this took place – having often only given the statutes a rather superficial glance upon joining the Society – in this fully conscious form only within the current working groups. The process of examining Rudolf Steiner's statutes and understanding them in contrast to the current proposal from the twelve-person convention usually led to fundamental, and in some cases vehement, criticism.

In early October 2026, the first findings regarding the objections, criticisms and new proposals are to be consolidated into a more comprehensive, balanced form by the aforementioned convention. In my view, this is likely to be doomed to failure from the outset, as the many objections diverge so widely and, moreover, cancel each other out in their diversity that it will be virtually impossible to take them into account in a 'balanced' manner.

Just as there are calls for more grassroots democracy – seeking to grant members a greater say in the appointment of leadership roles at the Goetheanum, or to influence the Goetheanum's calendar of events, including its programme of conferences and meetings, as well as the selection of texts published in the weekly journal and its newsletter –

there are also voices that would prefer greater clarity regarding procedures, the definition of roles, powers, mandates and election processes. They claim that this would help prevent potential disruptions to the Anthroposophical Society's operations and, consequently, to its 'success' within society as a whole. Clearly, the aim is to find arrangements that do not give rise to friction due to ambiguities in the statutes and the internal rules of procedure of the 'Executive Council' and the 'University Management' that are open to differing interpretations.

These latter endeavours, which are geared more towards the financial support and provision for a company than towards an association registered in the Swiss Commercial Register, are also championed by certain individuals within the 'Convention'. This concerns, above all, the consolidation of the 'Goetheanum leadership', which was redefined in 2012 following mediation by Friedrich Glasl, for which the members were not asked for their approval or opinion at any General Assembly. In 2012, a modern organisational management model was created and subsequently presented as being linked to the historical form of the founding statutes, even though the institutional circumstances were incomparable.

Since then, a major focus of the Goetheanum's financial management has been the stewardship of the property held by the Society, the resulting rental income and renovation costs, and, increasingly, the sale of houses bequeathed or donated to the Goetheanum. The latter is increasingly being entrusted to external trustees, as the new 'Goetheanum management' is hardly in a position to make the associated decisions any longer. This currently concerns around sixty properties, down from an original total of some eighty.

The ideal would be to use all income and administrative measures to support the further development of the School of Spiritual Science in Dornach, founded by Rudolf Steiner, and to employ these resources for the realisation of spiritual realities rather than for further administrative costs.

The consequences of the anthroposophical members' renewed engagement with their statutory organisational basis will test the capacity for insight and consensus within the 'Convention's' team of

mediators, which will either strengthen its significance or lead to its division. Since the preservation of the Goetheanum as a property association, as a venue and as an anthroposophical museum corresponds to a real and existing task, we can confidently await the course of events associated with this.

What, however, should have been countered with protective measures decades ago is the illusory self-deception that the aforementioned efforts towards reconstitution are intrinsically linked to Rudolf Steiner's intentions. To assume this is already refuted by a careful reading of the three-part proposal for the new statutes, which is loosely based on the fundamental anthropological threefold division of 'soul', 'spirit' and 'body': 1.) the members' association, which is conceived as having been founded by Rudolf Steiner / 2.) the characterisation, referred to for the first time as the 'Constitution of the School of Spiritual Science', of the training programme conducted by Rudolf Steiner over several months in 1924, which served Christian initiation / 3. the association that promotes and supports 'the Society and the School', within which the 'representatives' of anthroposophical spiritual life act as members of the new Goetheanum leadership. In future, every member would be part of both 1.) and 3.), and only their participation in 2.) would be optional.

Section 3 of the draft of the new statutes, amongst other things, succinctly states the following regarding membership: 'Members of the association are regarded as contributing members who develop their own active lives within the groups of the Anthroposophical Society and, through their membership fees, support the School of Spiritual Science and the Goetheanum.'

Those few people (whether within or outside the Anthroposophical Society) who strive for a revival of Rudolf Steiner's greatest cultural impulse – as evidenced by the founding of the Christmas Conference in 1923–24 – are well aware that such a revival cannot come about through the reform of the present Society, since no amendment to the statutes can resolve the underlying question of personnel. For it is never the institution that can or should commit itself to the spirit, but rather those individuals who wish to guarantee responsibility for its continued existence.

At the Society's founding meeting in 1923/24, it was therefore stipulated in §7: 'The establishment of the School of Spiritual Science is initially the responsibility of Rudolf Steiner, who is to appoint his colleagues and his eventual successor', which did not happen. Furthermore, §15 names Dr Rudolf Steiner as the first chair of the newly founded Society and Albert Steffen as the second chair. - Over the course of the last century, the founding chairman was succeeded by four further chairmen, right up to the 'teamwork' approach of today's 'Goetheanum leadership'.

Part of the tragedy of the Anthroposophical Society's development over the last century is that its leading representatives failed to recognise the fatal significance of the setback to Rudolf Steiner's central spiritual impulse for the life of their spiritual teacher and, radiating out from there, for his Society, which had been left to its own devices. Once the adversarial spirits had found their spiritual instruments in those who set fire to the First Goetheanum and, moreover, poisoned its founder mentally and physically through repeated attacks, they even succeeded in clouding and paralysing the spiritual 'I' impulses of the spiritual disciples he had admitted to the School of Spiritual Science to such an extent that his final attempt to save the community he had founded withered away whilst still in its infancy, and his endeavour to forge it into a Grail Community exalted in Christ failed.

Only when this is recognised by the members who are working towards a statutory renewal of the Goetheanum Association, registered under the name 'General Anthroposophical Society', and acknowledged in terms of its significance for their own lives within the Anthroposophical Society, will the fundamental question of personhood mentioned above be resolved. For the sensory-bound form of consciousness of the intellectual and feeling souls is incapable of this. It is not even capable of posing the personnel issue—merely alluded to here—in a spiritual sense, since it concerns the creation of a 'societal I' which, according to Rudolf Steiner's well-known statement, did not even exist in embryonic form in 1923. A leading group of individuals would come together who could foster an awareness of creative individuals spiritually connected to Rudolf Steiner and the work of Michael and, standing on this spiritual foundation, enable them to have the creative freedom within the spiritual university which they could utilise for the good of society through their

soul-consciousness abilities of genuine spiritual research and social dedication.

This intellectually guided, operationalist way of thinking describes the staffing issue as follows: “The sections are led by section leaders, who together form the College Council and, through it, represent the School within the Goetheanum leadership. In accordance with its rules of procedure, the Goetheanum leadership is responsible for appointing the section leaders and draws up regulations governing the appointment procedure and the formation of the selection committees.”

(Point C in the ‘Constitution of the School of Spiritual Science’ drawn up by the ‘Convent’.)

I would ask anyone who wishes to interpret this statement of mine as a lack of positivity or a lack of willingness to cooperate with regard to the attempt at a new constitution to bear in mind that, as a member associated with the Anthroposophical Society since 1973, I have expressed my views on the question of the statutes at length and repeatedly over the past decades in **Das Goetheanum**, **Die Gegenwart**, ‘Info3’, ‘Die Drei’, ‘Beiträge zur Weltlage’ and internal newsletters in the same spirit as I do today. Several writings on the subject of the Rudolf Steiner Society have also been published by SeminarVerlag, Basel. - I therefore take the liberty of including here the concluding sentences of a reflection which I shared in 1993 – thirty-three years ago – with the members of what was then the ‘Gideon Spicker Association’, as its co-founder and a member of the executive committee:

‘... The School of Spiritual Science is, in a spiritual sense, currently closed. The class sessions were described by Herbert *Witzenmann* in his essay

in 1981 as “an area” “in which one should seek an individual connection with Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual mediators”. (Note 2026: Spiritual observation shows that this occurred occasionally until the end of the 1980s; following the publication of the class texts in 1992 and the fateful retention of the role of the lecturer or class mediator, this connection must now be established in a different way.) - Does the will to find a connection with Rudolf Steiner not need to be reoriented today? Should it not seek to relate itself to his spiritual activity that is currently at work? - We do not support Rudolf Steiner in his endeavour to find points of

connection for his renewed healing work if we harbour illusions about the break in continuity within the form of the School of Spiritual Science established by him – which was set up as an institution publicly accessible within the spiritual life that shapes civilisation ...”

(The full text can be found here <https://seminarverlagbasel.com/R-A-Savoldelli-Freie-Hochschule-Verlust-und-Wiedergewinn-1993-p101811709>)

Rudolf Steiner's comments on this

In class

‘What is communicated here at the Michael School, which rightly exists, is only meaningful when conveyed orally – this is an inner occult law – with the exception of the mantric sayings.’

(3rd revision lesson of the First Class, 11 September 1924)

“My dear sisters and brothers, the mantric verses imparted in this school may only be possessed by those who are legitimate members of the school, that is to say, those in possession of the blue certificate. Anyone who is absent from a session which they could already have attended following the date of their admission – so please note this point carefully: the mantras from those sessions which they could already have attended following the date of their admission – may obtain these mantras from one of the other members who have lawfully received them here at the school. However, this requires obtaining permission either from Dr Wegman or from myself. This is not an administrative measure, but is rooted in the nature of an occult school, where a tangible act must precede the handing over of anything of this kind. However, the only person who may make an enquiry of Dr Wegman or myself is the one who wishes to give the incantations to another; not the one who wishes to receive them. One cannot make the enquiry as the recipient; rather, one must have the person who wishes to give them make the enquiry. It is entirely futile for the recipient to ask... None of this constitutes coercive or arbitrary measures. All of this is grounded in occult laws. For if anything falls into the wrong hands, it ceases to be effective for all those for whom it is intended to be effective. So if abuse occurs by giving mantric incantations or the content of what has been presented here to the wrong individuals, then these mantric incantations and what has been presented here lose their efficacy for those seated

here.” (5th Revision Lesson of the First Class, 15 September 1924)
(Note by RAS: As I often hear that meditating on the mantras handed down by R. Steiner is still effective today — naturally without considering, let alone justifying, why R. Steiner might have been mistaken on this point — I would point out that what was meant was the legitimate, Christian-Michaelic-inspired effect, not that a soul-spiritual effect, the essential nature of which remains unexplored, can be ascertained. This depends, amongst other things, on the expectations and wishes of the meditator during the class session or whilst actually meditating at home; on the location and the building in which what is heard is received; on the reader or the ‘free mediator’ of Rudolf Steiner’s introductions; and on the social relationship the student maintains with him.)
(5th revision lesson of the First Class, 14 September 1924)

Testimony by Ina Schuurmann in a conversation with Jakob Streit

‘It was in the 1950s. The author had a conversation with Mrs Maria Ina Schurmann, wife of the musician Max Schuurmann. We spoke about the concerns of the Anthroposophical Society since Rudolf Steiner’s passing. She was, after all, one of the early eurythmists and, under Rudolf Steiner’s direction, played the angel in the Oberufer Christmas plays. Then she told me the following: ‘After the discussions at the Christmas Conference, I was sitting at the back of the stage in the carpentry workshop, where there was an artists’ corner with a sofa for resting before and after the performances. Then Rudolf Steiner came round from the lecture hall. When he saw me sitting there, he said to me: “Well, I hope that will last for another ten years.”’ - And he walked on. In late summer 1924, I was sitting in the same spot in the artists’ corner before an event. Rudolf Steiner came past on his way to a lecture. As soon as he spotted me, he said to me, in a pronounced manner: ‘The Christmas Conference has failed.’ - He walked on. I was deeply shaken. For two years I did not even dare to tell my husband about this experience. I then gave the estate administration a written report as a witness to this statement. »
(Jakob Streit was a long-standing member of the Rudolf Steiner Estate Association, founded by Marie Steiner in 1943 (quoted from *Der Europäer*, Sept. 2023)

Testimony from Dr Bruno Krüger in a conversation with Jakob Streit in the 1970s, as recounted by the latter

'Dr Bruno Krüger was a public prosecutor in Berlin during the First World War.

Rudolf Steiner would have liked to bring him to Stuttgart as a co-speaker for the

Threefold Social Order Initiative. It was only after protracted negotiations over his release

was he able to take on this role. Alongside this, he worked as a freelance lawyer in Stuttgart and

handled civil litigation right up into his old age.

"... He is said to have arrived in Dornach in late summer 1924 and met Rudolf Steiner, who approached him straight away. Dr Krüger heard him utter the shattering words: 'The impulse of the Christmas Conference has been shattered.'"

When Dr Krüger recounted this and repeated Dr Steiner's words, it sounded like a pained cry. But then Dr Steiner continued: "Dr Krüger, please come to Dornach in October. We must start all over again." -

At the end of September, Rudolf Steiner gave his final address and fell ill. Consequently, his intention to prepare a reorganisation of the Society together with Dr Krüger could no longer be realised. During this conversation, Dr Krüger, then 90 years old, was in full possession of his mental faculties. » (‘Der Europäer’, Sept. 2023)

The well-known priest and writer Rudolf Meyer reported in a letter dated 7 October 1961 to Johann Waeger, administrator of the R. Steiner estate, on a remark he had heard Rudolf Steiner make during the Koberwitz course at Whitsun 1924:

*'... That remark (I believe this must be more or less correct) went like this: **"The Christmas Conference will not be recorded. There is still time. But if it has not been recorded by autumn (or October? or Michaelmas? – it probably said: "autumn") then the Ahrimanic forces will strike.**'* - The last phrase seems to me to be the most

important part of it; for then one sees the precision with which such a thing takes effect. It also gives the illness a particular background.

However, I shall refrain entirely from interpreting it here ..."

*(A facsimile of the original letter can be found in *Der Europäer*, Sept. 2023)*

Rudolf Steiner on the relationship between spiritual impulse and administrative organisation

" . . . Let a generation unfold its spiritual life more freely for once, and then organise this spiritual life as it sees fit; it is the purest form of slavery for the next generation. Spiritual life must be free in reality, not merely in theory, but in practice. The people involved in it must experience that freedom. Spiritual life becomes a great tyranny if it spreads at all on earth, for without the intervention of an organisation it cannot spread, and when an organisation intervenes, the organisation immediately becomes a tyrant ..."

(R. Steiner, 4th lecture from 'Anthroposophy, Social Threefolding and the Art of Public Speaking' in Dornach on 14 October 1921)

On the posthumous relationship between the founder of a spiritual community and its institution

This remark, which is important for our question of reconstitution, was made in one of the last lectures Rudolf Steiner gave to members outside Dornach.

"... In the course of historical development, one sees the founders of a particular cause – those personalities who were deeply connected to it – as, when one traces the karmic course, they become separated from these movements, and these movements pass over to entirely different forces. So one learns that it makes no historical sense at all to speak of today's Jesuit Order in such a way as to trace it back to Ignatius of Loyola. External history does this. Inner insight cannot do this at all, because one sees how individualities separate from their movements ..." (R. Steiner in London, 24 August 1924)

A closing remark by Herbert Witzenmann

In one of my conversations with a member of the Goetheanum leadership at the time (see also the latest Seminar Newsletter No. 69 from July), whose spiritual work in the service of the Anthroposophical Society during his time on the Executive Council (1963–1988) was not recognised, but rather opposed to the detriment of the Society by grotesque means employed by some colleagues on the Executive Committee and amongst the national secretaries, I asked him whether

he was aware of Rudolf Steiner's remarks concerning the failure of the Christmas Conference impulse. Even if he was unlikely to have been familiar with the exact wording quoted above, he was well aware of the Society's failure.

This was evident in the fact that he confided in me the **remark Rudolf Steiner** had made to **Günther Wachsmuth** on the path above the First Goetheanum as darkness fell. Witzemann had been told of this by Wachsmuth, with whom he had repeatedly and enjoyably conversed even before his appointment to the Goetheanum Executive Committee. The source is thus unambiguous thanks to this short chain of transmission.

After the young Wachsmuth had made an enthusiastic remark about the beauty of the Goetheanum building, which stood out in the distance with its brightly coloured windows, Rudolf Steiner said to him in a firm tone: *"We must reclaim it at the end of the century."*

Herbert Witzemann: "You see, Mr Savoldelli, with regard to the Christmas Conference, the most important thing is not whether it was a success or a failure, but that it took place." – And then he added: *"Doesn't the most spiritually significant thing always fail at first?"* – And the thought of Golgotha resonated unspoken in the air.

