

## All Lawsuits Retracted

**On March 4, 2008, 43 members excluded from the General Anthroposophical Society a year ago informed the Dorneck Thierstein District Court and the Solothurn High Court of their decision immediately to end the three lawsuits they had filed against the Executive Council in connection with this decision. This move was preceded by the plaintiff's proposal to share legal expenses, which the Council did not accept.**

After being excluded from the General Anthroposophical Society by the Executive Council in March 2007, 43 of the 44 members excluded had at once decided to challenge this action in court.

Three of these members had also filed a separate suit to challenge a new Society ruling (*Grundsatzbeschluss*) making it impossible for members of the Living the Christmas Conference, Society for the Preservation of the General Anthroposophical Society of 1923/25 (*Gelebte Weihnachtstagung, Gesellschaft zur Bewahrung der Allgemeinen Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft 1923/25*) to be at the same time members of the General Anthroposophical Society. That case had been suspended for procedural reasons.

At that time, a third lawsuit, brought separately by five of these members, was already pending; it challenged the Executive Council's countermotions (*Nichteintretensanträge*), made at the extraordinary General Members' Meeting on April 8, 2006, against hearing, discussing and voting on five member motions. The Dorneck-Thierstein Court had already upheld the Council's side in this lawsuit on June 15, 2007, but the appeal to the Solothurn High Court on June 28 was still pending.

The **suit challenging the exclusions** took a normal course: After a failed attempt, on August 23, 2007, to settle out of court, the plaintiffs submitted their written complaint on November 30, and a deadline was set for the Council's reply.

On February 15, 2008, our attorney sent a proposal to the Council's lawyer: We would give up all further action on the lawsuits, each party would be responsible for its own expenses, and court costs would be evenly split. In his February 21<sup>st</sup> reply, which the plaintiffs' lawyer received on February 26, the Council's lawyer wrote that the Council "was not interested" in this proposal. On the same day we also learned the Council's lawyer had submitted his response to our written complaint to the court.

## **Our March 4, 2008 letter has now put an immediate end to all three of these lawsuits.**

What led to these lawsuits and to their subsequent repeal?

Ever since the year 2000, we had been working to prevent the Executive Council from dissolving the General Anthroposophical Society and integrating it into a new society of a strongly authoritarian nature. In the end, we realized that we could only achieve this by taking the Council to court. The court upheld our case and prevented the dissolution of the Society.

In the spring of 2007, the Council excluded us from the Society. That was a severe blow. How were we to deal with this exclusion, which we still consider a great injustice?

We decided to go to court once again. We felt that challenging the exclusion legally was our only hope for retaining our membership in the Society. But after many searching discussions among all our members, exploring both sides of the issue, we were no longer sure that the legal path was the best path for us to follow.

Our strong, continuing inner connection with the Society spoke for *upholding the lawsuits*, for, in spite of having been excluded, we remain members inwardly, and long to keep faith with this society which Rudolf Steiner created as a model of true cooperation and deep mutual understanding among members. How are we to help further this ideal, we wondered, unless we are members?

However, as our discussions continued, we began to wonder whether *retracting the lawsuits* might not, in the end, form a better foundation for the hoped-for future interaction and cooperation with all members. How effectively would we be able to work in the Society if we retained our membership solely by decree of a court of law? We do not want any court decision to come between the other members and ourselves, jeopardizing our mutual understanding, our ability to work closely together.

It was most difficult for us to reach the decision of ending legal action. In the end, we had to bow to the reality that the **financial burden** of continuing the lawsuits is much too great for us.

As we retract the lawsuits and seek to re-examine our actions and goals, we are guided by the hope that in the future it might be possible to work together with the members of the General Anthroposophical Society again.

*The excluded members of the General Anthroposophical Society*

(English by Christiane Marks)