

What *else* is going on at the Goetheanum!

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This newsletter is an independent and private initiative on current and historical questions and affairs concerning the General Anthroposophical Society and its environment. Each author is solely responsible for his articles. Unlabelled articles originate from the publisher himself. Editor: Thomas Heck. Imprint at the end of this issue.

Ahead of the General Assembly 2019

On the Financial Statement 2018

“The 2018 financial year has ended with a gratifying result: the budget was balanced earlier than expected. This is due to the many efforts made at the Goetheanum, the increased cooperation with the countries and not least to the members.”

This is the opening statement of this year's Financial Report in Anthroposophy worldwide 4/19. And compared to the estimated budget for 2018, published at the AGM 2018, which showed a loss of 600 TCHF (TCHF = 1,000 CHF), this seems to be good news and gives the impression that this is above all a result of efforts made at the Goetheanum. However, the comparison reveals a problem, which becomes evident from the published table but probably goes unnoticed by most people: For if there had not been legacies and inheritances to the sum of 1.4 million Francs, it would have been necessary to report and explain a loss of exactly this amount! The balanced budget is therefore mainly due to these legacies and inheritances. If one really wanted to compare what was planned or budgeted with what was actually achieved, one would have to assume a loss of CHF 1.4 million for the year, had those legacies and inheritances not come in. This clearly shows that the actual result of the efforts to achieve a balanced budget is in fact negative. However, this is only part of the bad news, albeit the largest. To this loss must also be added the change in the various reserves (a recourse to reserves formed in previous years) amounting to approx. 430 TCHF, as well as extraordinary income and income unrelated to the accounting period amounting to approx. 496 TCHF, the causes of which did not lie in the current year's operation. If all this is added together, the loss comparable to the planned budget amounts to CHF 2.3 million and thus there is a negative difference to the budget (estimation) of CHF 1.7 million, which urgently requires an explanation.

The result of these considerations can also be expressed as follows: If the development of the year 2018 had been as predicted by the Executive Council at the

AGM 2018 according to the budget, a „budget deficit“ of TCHF 1.7 million would have replaced the reported balanced result.

Thus, the positive presentation does not reflect the actual situation if the result of the described efforts is worse by a seven figure sum than was had been intended and if the reported balanced result is solely due to the legacies and inheritances, the recourse to reserves from previous years and extraordinary income and income relating to other periods.

On the other hand, the Financial Report states: *“This [the balanced budget] is due to the many efforts made at the Goetheanum, the increased cooperation with the countries and not least to the members.”* In fact, the result is mainly due to the members, from whom the legacies, inheritances and donations originate. One of the achievements of the leadership, however, is the fact that, in addition to the usual Christmas donation appeal, it has also recently made a major summer donation appeal. The real problem however is that the facts described above do not seem to have been recognized by the leadership at all, at least not by the vast majority.

The approval of a financial report is tantamount to the agreement with the reporting and the actions of those responsible for the annual result. In other words: „Go on like this“.

Addition I

This presentation is not intended to express any criticism of any actions. The extensive report of the Executive Council, which has now been presented for the first time, gives an idea of how much individuals are

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contributing and what sort of pressure they are under. However, it must be criticized how a negative result is presented here to the membership (and possibly also to colleagues?) as something positive and how a wrong picture is thus created. Why is the reporting not honest and truthful and why are mistakes or misjudgements not admitted to where appropriate? The latter would make it possible to be supportive of the undoubtedly difficult situation and above all create trust, which cannot be created by such a financial report even with the best of will, at least not in those who see through it.

Addition II

Last year, the title of the financial report was: “*Addressing the structural deficit.*” It stated, among other things: “*This economic recovery of the Goetheanum after years of structural annual deficits – often bridged by legacies – is absolutely necessary. It is an important component of the ‹Goetheanum in Development› initiative that is spread across three years. This structural change constitutes an enormous challenge for the staff and leadership of the Goetheanum – and 2018 will be a testing time that will reveal whether or not the envisaged plans and goals can be achieved.*” The result of this important test period now lies before us and is, unfortunately, *negative*.

The structural deficit that is to be eliminated remains an unclear entity, since no presentation based on the concrete figures and the development over several years is shown. The following table may serve as a suggestion for a future presentation in the Financial Report. Even though the free donations are rightly available to cover ongoing operations, they are excluded here solely for the sake of comparability. For many years, however, the self-imposed goal of no longer using legacies and inheritances to cover budget deficits has not been achieved in a sustainable manner.

The calculation of this structural deficit is by no means arbitrary and corresponds to the calculation method described by Justus Wittich in Anthroposophy Worldwide 7-8/19. It is clear that a positive development is not discernible. And it also begs the question why annual budget proposals are drawn up which then prove to be considerably out of line with the actual results. Despite years of experience, can those responsible still not assess the future development correctly or is it the purpose an embellished budget to reassure the members? Thus the question arises as to whether the actual result in 2019 will once again deviate from the budget by a million Francs, unfortunately to the negative, as every year.

	2016		2017		2018		2019
	Result	Budget	Result	Budget	Result	Budget	Budget
Balance result	-269	0	-960	0	0	-600	-300
Value change (Weleda)			1.200				
Non-designated donations	806	1.000	1.638	1.000	983	850	850
Legacies	991	500	370	500	1.404		200
Change of reserves	-567	300	262	300	-430	200	200
Sale of real estate	20		180				
Extraordinary result			148		496		250
Structural deficit	-2.633	-1.200	-2.854	-1.200	-3.313	-1.250	-1.400

All figures are taken from the published annual financial statements.

The Dignity of the Goetheanum Addendum and Amendment

The reference to the photoshoot at the Goetheanum and the resulting pictures have triggered numerous reactions and many members expressed a complete lack of understanding as to how such an action could have taken place at the Goetheanum. A reader of my newsletter wrote as follows:

„For me this action constitutes a prostitution of our building and I cannot garner anything positive from it. In the absence of any other ideas to raise money, we should seriously think about questioning all paid management functions and work structures of our Society, especially at the Goetheanum, and if necessary filling them with volunteers and thus securing and protecting our building for activities that are appropriate for it.

If our membership fees are used to employ people who give room to such ideas, actions and monstrosities of tastelessness and disrespect towards Rudolf Steiner's mystery building, who tolerate something like this, I feel completely out of place and deeply abused as a member. “

It has now been clarified who Wolfgang Held had asked „in-house“: It was the stage management, meaning that Nils Frischknecht and Stefan Hasler, who were both actively involved as fashion assistants and dance coordinators as well as models, are majorly responsible. Several days before the event, preparations had already been made at the Goetheanum and individual members of the stage ensemble had been asked to act as models. Even the Executive Council, responsible for everything that happens at the Goetheanum, was informed in advance. Did really no one have any idea about the nature of the pictures that were to be expected from this or about the background to the „Garage-Magazine“? Thus the Goetheanum and individuals themselves were given up for this action. The question to the treasurer would be secondary, but nevertheless important: Who received how much money for this action?

By no means all members of the Goetheanum Leadership would have approved of this event - at least that is what one would hope. Clear criticism has been expressed by at least a few individuals within the leadership. But as usual, this happens internally, behind closed doors, presumably in order to preserve the - long lost - dignity of the offices and their holders. From the point of view of the members, this obviously unconditional solidarity, especially within the leadership of the Goetheanum, leads to the perception that the entire leadership of the Society stands united behind the ac-

tion – as has happened so often already, for example also in relation to the Faust production 2016. It is not truthful or honest when solidarity and collective awareness amongst one another come first and are more important and stronger than an honest openness towards the membership.

The announcements from the Goetheanum combined (Wolfgang Held, Justus Wittich and Stefan Hasler) result in the following statement: „Everything we did was in order and appropriate, but we are not going to do it again.“ Whereby one cannot be completely sure about this because Stefan Hasler had expressed to me (in writing) that he would stand by any attempt to enter into an exchange with people outside our circles - in other words, explicitly also with the Garage magazine of the Vice-group.

All this might not be considered of particular importance, the photos are certainly technically excellent and aesthetically appealing from a certain perspective. Presumably those who took part also enjoyed doing so. What really is alarming though is the fact that those responsible at the Goetheanum obviously no longer have a feeling for what befits to the purpose and dignity of this house. It doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone that a great number of members, who play the biggest part in making the work at the Goetheanum possible, have no understanding whatsoever for this action and see the dignity of the Goetheanum violated by it. Instead of now admitting that this action was a mistake, the published text is described as excellent, the whole action is talked down or embellished and there is a suggestion that an intrinsically harmless action has been artificially exaggerated by the members.

It is well known that especially clothing, even and particularly by well-known labels, is manufactured in Asia under extremely questionable social and ecological conditions. As consumers we can hardly escape this fact. By using the Goetheanum as the venue for taking these advertising photos for the magazine which belongs to the Vice-Group, with the participation of eurythmists including the stage and section management, the responsible persons associated themselves with the more than questionable economic methods of the Vice-Group and the fashion companies, actively and with the knowledge of the Society's leadership, and this in the year in which the Section for Social Science is staging large public events to celebrate 100 years of Threefold Social Order.

A trifling matter?

Imprint

Please note

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