

## Membership – Hans Georg Krauch 1927-2014

Hans Georg Krauch passed over the threshold on 6 June 2014 in Frankfurt, Germany. His role in furthering the development of Waldorf Education and the Anthroposophical Movement in South and East Africa from the late 1970s to the 1990s was considerable – particularly in the Western Cape.

### Background

Hans Georg Krauch was born on 1 June 1927 in Wiesbaden-Erbenheim, and grew up in Giessen close to Frankfurt. His parents were early members of the Anthroposophical Society. His father founded the local branch in Giessen following the advice of Friedrich Rittelmeyer.

He was twelve years old when the catastrophe of World War II broke out. In 1944, just on turning seventeen, he was called up for military service as the allied armies landed in Normandy. He was captured in the last days of the war and placed in a French prisoner of war camp in Attachy with 200 000 German soldiers. Conditions were harsh, with much physical deprivation and hunger. After his release he made his way home, finding it bombed, his father in an American prisoner-of-war camp - but at least both parents alive.

Over the next seven years he studied Waldorf teacher training in Stuttgart, teaching a Class 6 with 56 children, continuing his studies at university in Frankfurt, and further teaching to Class 8. He married Gabriele Frey, a fellow student at the Stuttgart training seminar, and had two children before a catastrophic event intervened in his life. At the age of 26 he was struck with polio with both legs paralysed, and hospitalised followed by two years of curative support. Three years after the event Gabriele gave birth to their third child. Because of this radical challenge to his life he deliberately changed his academic teaching subjects to focus on the training of the will. He revised his studies to become a woodwork teacher at the Frankfurt Waldorf School. For the next twenty two years Hans Georg taught, supporting himself with crutches.

In 1966 he took over from Dr. Hagen Biesantz as director of the Frankfurt Arbeitzentrum (Work Centre) for the Anthroposophical Society in Germany, when the latter took up his position on the Executive Council of the General Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum. The following year Hans Georg joined the Representatives Circle of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany.

In the early seventies he started his teacher training activities in Stuttgart and Witten, and later in Mannheim as a full time teacher trainer. In 1975 he became a member of the Executive Council of the Waldorf School Association (Bund) in Germany. During that year he began planning for the building for the Anthroposophical Work Centre in Frankfurt, 'Rudolf Steiner Haus', completed in 1986. The following year he joined The Hague Circle (International Forum for Waldorf Schools).

In consultation with Rudolf Grosse, and later Jorgen Smit, Hans Georg founded the Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical Section in Germany with Johannes Tautz, Stefan Leber, and Ernst-Michael Kranich. He became its co-ordinator and secretary.

In the early eighties he founded GALA, an association for anthroposophical care of the aged, and the following year an association instrumental in the development of a large old age home in Frankfurt,

'Haus Ala Textor Goethe' - connected by corridor to the Rudolf Steiner House. Hans-Georg and Gabriele lived in this home from 1985 onwards.

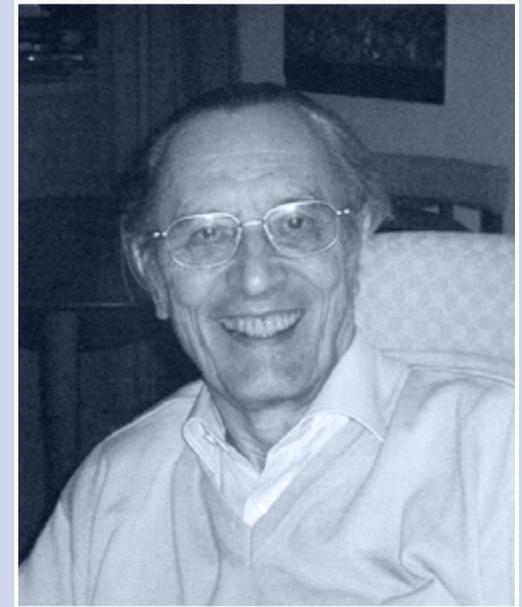
### South Africa

Hans Georg visited South Africa 10 times between 1977 and 1991, Botswana four times and Namibia twice. He returned for a last visit in 1997. During these visits he gave lectures, courses, artistic workshops and innumerable meetings and counselling sessions in Waldorf Schools, Camphill Centres, the Cape Town School of Eurythmy, the Novalis Institute and Anthroposophical Society meetings, conferences, study groups and branches.

With his first visit to South Africa the race relations question struck him hard. After his return to Europe he researched and lectured on the subject a number of times, including one at the Goetheanum in October 1978. In the context of the anthroposophical movement he was prophetic in his attempt to raise the topic into open discussion as a major issue of our times - an issue that would hit the anthroposophical movement worldwide in later decades. A consequence of these presentations and his reports on South Africa, he was asked by Rudolf Grosse, President of the General Anthroposophical Society, to represent South Africa in the absence of a connecting link with the country at the time. He also invited Hans Georg to become a Class Holder of the High School of Spiritual Science and to assist in furthering the tasks of the School in the country.

### Waldorf School Movement

Hans Georg made strong connections with Huibert and Annelie Franken at the Max Stibbe School near Pretoria, Rupert and Lyda Bräunlich at Constantia, colleagues of the Michael Mount School, and Janine Hurner's later pioneering of the Roseway School in KwaZulu-Natal. In the year of his first visit, he found the Constantia School



in grave financial difficulties, and negotiated funding that saved it from possible closure. In the late 1970s, Hans Georg inspired and founded the Federation of Waldorf Schools in South Africa, together with Francis Edmunds, founder of Emerson College in England - along with South African colleagues, Marion Penfold, Huibert Franken, Joseph Daitz and Eddie Dawes. Soon afterwards, on behalf of the Federation, he initiated the first Waldorf teacher training centre in the country - led by Lyda Braunlich at the Constantia School.

### **Anthroposophical Society and Movement:**

Hans Georg contributed much to the Anthroposophical Society and Movement in the country at large. He lectured and gave courses in branches and groups in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. He gave lectures and courses in national conferences of the Anthroposophical Society in South Africa, and often met with the executive council comprising its members - Francois Maritz (later General Secretary), Marianne Maritz, Alec Andrews (Treasurer) and Guy Wertheim-Aymes. He also lectured on the 'Philosophy of Freedom' in the Cape Town School of Eurythmy.

In April 1983 he founded a youth group in Cape Town that would continue with his support for several years. The group consisted of such members as Bernard and Caroline Hurner, Jose De Nobrega, Keith Struthers, Etienne Bruwer, Christina Steyn, Janet Goss, Yvonne Herring, Maria Rademeyer, Jane Wadely, Trevor Button, and Cyril Coetzee - who had to move to Johannesburg soon after its founding. A consistent core activity of the group was the study of Theosophy, Occult Science and the Mystery Dramas. The formation of this group had a profound effect on the lives and destiny of its participants. Three marriages occurred! Many members of this group continue today carrying significant tasks and roles in the Anthroposophical Movement in the country.

However, Hans Georg's main focus of interest was the Anthroposophical Society in the Western Cape. When he first arrived he brought with him considerable experience and expertise in handling Anthroposophical Society affairs. Twelve years previously Hans Georg had taken over directorship of the *Arbeitszentrum* (Work Centre) in Frankfurt for the Anthroposophical Society in Germany in the Hesse region. As mentioned earlier he had taken over this task from Dr. Hagen Biesantz. Hagen Biesantz had visited South Africa in 1972 and inspired the reforming of the Anthroposophical Society in South Africa with a new constitution and an executive council with its members stated above. As an important component of this structural transformation he motivated the founding of the Anthroposophical Society in the Western Cape, as a regional branch modelled on the work centre in Frankfurt - all be it on a far smaller scale.

Years later Hans Georg reflected back on how, during his first visit in 1978, he was struck by this influence of Dr Biesantz. In that year Margaret Wegerif, who had been carrying the Anthroposophical Society in the Western Cape, both as secretary and treasurer, resigned. Older members agreed to Hans Georg's prompting younger members to form an executive committee. These were Marie Hockly, Beverly Hart, Hanna Hack (Treasurer), Heinz Maurer as ex officio mentor and Michael Grimley (Secretary) - a position he held for the next ten years with ongoing guidance and support from Hans Georg.

At the same time, Hans Georg encouraged the formation of an initiative group of representatives of the pioneering daughter movements in the Western Cape. It's task being to take responsibility for the development of the Anthroposophical Society and Movement in the region. Amongst others, the Initiative Group included such members as Jeanne Malherbe (Bloublommetjieskloof BD Farm), Janine Hurner (Constantia Waldorf Kindergarten), Rupert and Lyda Bräunlich (Constantia Waldorf School), Peter Brown

(Alpha Camphill), Siegrid Quednau (Cape Town Eurythmy School), Corrie Huysman (Cape Group), Heinz Maurer (Christian Community), Michael Grimley (Michael Oak) and other members of the Committee. Michael Grimley chaired the meetings, which met monthly to oversee and take initiatives furthering the life of the Society. The Committee acted as its administrative arm. For many years the meetings were introduced with a study session on Rudolf Steiner's 'Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, and The Michael Mystery' (GA 26). Hans Georg guided these sessions when he visited.

### **An Anthroposophical Centre for the Western Cape**

From 1978 onwards, the primary focus of the Initiative Group was to establish a work centre for the Anthroposophical Movement in the region. Hans Georg had persuaded the Constantia Waldorf School to offer a site on its grounds for this purpose. The Initiative group accepted the offer and an envisioning process was set in motion facilitated by him, and modelled on the simultaneous initiative taking place in Frankfurt - what later became the Rudolf Steiner Haus, home of the Anthroposophical Work Centre for the Hesse/Wurtemberg region. The Centre on the Constantia site aimed to house the activities of the Anthroposophical Society, the Waldorf Teacher Training Project, the Eurythmy School, and even the Christian Community - until such time it was able to locate its own premises. Michael Grimley took on managing the project with support from Initiative Group members.

Through Hans Georg's encouragement the Initiative Group inspired local donors to support the venture with 18 members paying monthly amounts over a five year period. Larger donations were offered by the Frankfurter Stiftung, a funding organisation to which Hans Georg was connected, and the Shayley Company which owned the property housing the Gibaud Bequest Library and the activities of the older Cape Group in Osborne Road, Mowbray. The directors of this

company were Corrie Huysman, Beverly Hart and Michael Grimley.

Hans Georg was instrumental in motivating the need for the Anthroposophical Society in the Western Cape to form a constitution with a legal identity to hold and manage such funds. The constitution was drafted by Heinz Maurer and Michael Grimley, and accepted by the Society at an Annual General Meeting. In the meantime the young student architect, Michael Rudolf, was commissioned to design the building.

In 1983, five years of preparation was almost complete; with funding in place, final plans agreed to, and the Western Cape Society with a legal identity to take ownership. However, a revised costing indicated the need for an amount over double of what was originally envisaged. The Constantia School was unable to reconfirm the offer as the project could only be realised through a phased development with the Anthroposophical Society's needs incorporated in a first stage; and the teacher training project addressed later when future funding might become available. The local funding achieved through the donations of the 18 members had been used up for architect's and legal fees. All that was left of the Society's financial assets, including membership fees, amounted to almost zero!

In an emergency session of the Initiative Group it was decided to attempt saving the venture by looking for alternative premises and persuading the Frankfurter Stiftung to re-align their funding offer. The directors of the Shayley Company had already committed to selling the Mowbray property. Members of the Initiative Group searched properties between Newlands and Tokai. Two places were found at affordable cost - one in Kenilworth and the other in Constantia. The Initiative Group decided on the latter - 'Bon Air', in Price Drive. In an urgent telephone conference with Hans Georg he agreed to send the funding promised without seeing any picture or plans, and so relying on our judgment in good faith. The property was bought in the last months of

1983, and the Society moved into the premises in January 1984.

Further donations were received from the Anthroposophical Society in South Africa and Guy Wertheim Aymes. These were used to renovate and modify the premises for the Society's immediate needs. Later improvements were made as a result of a donation by Siegrid Müller, via Erhardt Fücke. She also made it possible to financially support Lyda Bräunlich as house mother and coordinator for some years.

Overnight the Western Cape Society's capital assets had jumped from virtually zero to the value of a substantial property in a prestigious suburb of Cape Town. About a third of this amount had come from the Frankfurter Stiftung, through Hans Georg Krauch. But more importantly he had been the inspiring agent and driving force behind the whole project. What we did not know at the time is that the donation from Frankfurt was part of the budget for the Rudolf Steiner Haus building. A decision had been made that a portion of the amount allocated should be given as a gift elsewhere in the world in support of a project similar in kind. Without it the Anthroposophical Society in the Western Cape would not be where it is today.

Just over 21 years later the property was sold well over twenty times the value it was originally bought for. An attempt was made to recover the initiative for building the centre on the Constantia School grounds. When this failed again, the present premises, 'Sophia House', was found in Plumstead and continues today as the centre for the Anthroposophical Society in the Western Cape and its activities.

### East Africa

Towards the second half of the 1980s Hans Georg began to spend more time in East Africa, visiting there 6 times between 1988 and 1996; mostly in Kenya, but including a visit to Uganda and another to Tanzania. Through his connection with Florian Bucklacher and Vojko Vrbancic he helped establish the Mbagathi Kindergarten

and later the school, near Nairobi - an initiative pioneering the Waldorf School movement in East Africa. His support included funding, teacher training courses and much counselling.

In later years the Danish organisation, Sanduko, represented by Troels Ussing followed through on Hans Georg's earlier contributions. Through Sanduko, South African colleagues – such as, Anne Sharfman, Eddie Dawes, Peter and Catherine Van Alphen, developed teacher training courses and a mentoring programme for Waldorf schools and kindergartens that had since developed in Kenya and Tanzania, and related schools in Uganda.

### Ending

Hans Georg found in South Africa a deep and abiding friendship with Heinz Maurer, the Christian Community priest in Cape Town. Jeanne Malherbe related how they used to swim in the Bloublommetjieskloof dam close to the old farm house, playing like two little boys – the one, crippled with his disabled legs, and the other, with his unhealed war injuries. In 1982 Heinz died. Years later Hans Georg said to me that once Heinz Maurer had died his personal reasons for coming to South Africa had ended.

As a youthful member of the Society I attended his first lecture in Cape Town in 1977. He entered the room with crutches. He could not stand as both his legs were paralysed by polio in his twenties. He used the back of a chair to support himself with great effort - and looked like a giant migratory bird that had flown off course from another continent! He spoke in German (with a translator) about money, an unusual subject in anthroposophical circles at the time. Six months later he returned again and this time spoke in English. Although his English was rudimentary, we all hung on to every word helping him to find the right expression. We were deeply impressed. Years later he told me that he had been learning his English with a tape recorder travelling daily between Frankfurt and Mannheim.

A memorable interaction with him was when I told him I was really struggling during my first year as a class teacher, and that I felt I was a complete dilettante. He responded by saying "Good, never lose that feeling!" But then went on to give me some practical tips.

I had the opportunity to visit Hans Georg at his home on several occasions from 1986 onwards. On every occasion he was keen to hear all that was happening with our Anthroposophical initiatives in South Africa. When I last spoke with him a few years ago he continued to express a longing to return to South Africa in spite of his increasing physical handicaps.

Hans Georg Krauch's passing represents the end of an era that began in 1945. He was one of a generation who lifted what was left of the Anthroposophical Movement out of the rubble and devastation of Middle Europe, fostered its re-emergence and development to the end of the 20th Century - and in the process, offered its fruits to the world. He had an extraordinary power of will and capacity for moral imagination and technique. He arrived in South Africa in 1977 to a situation of social upheaval arising from the Soweto Uprising a year earlier. He found the Anthroposophical Movement still in its pioneering phase and beset with difficulties. It was isolated from the rest of the world and struggling to find its identity in a mixed society and culture split apart by racial fear and bitter antagonism. Through Hans Georg, a resurgence began which led to the striking development of the Movement at the time of South Africa's transformation from 1994 onwards.

Hans Georg died in Frankfurt. Wolfgang Kiltau, coordinator of the Arbeitzentrum at Rudolf Steiner Haus, sent the following message three days after the funeral,

"When Hans Georg lay in his last days an African nurse helped wash him every morning ...When she heard that he had died, she called two other nurses, who also came from Africa. So, when

the soul of Hans Georg broke free from his body, there were three Africans at his bedside. Is this not a wonderful twist of destiny?"

*Michael Grimley*

17/06/2014

