

Report of the ACESTA conference on Safeguarding, Succession and Governance

Emerson College, 29th May-2nd June 2019

An impressive exhibition of pictures depicting the story of Kaspar Hauser, the 'Child of Europe', by the painter Greg Tricker formed the centre piece of the recent conference of ACESTA, the professional 'Association for Care, Education and Social Therapy out of Anthroposophy', at Emerson College in Forest Row.

This conference, with the title: "Safeguarding, Succession and Governance in the 21st Century- Michael and Ahriman" was well attended and successful.

Paulamaria Blaxland de Lange, the chair of ACESTA and the artistic and creative mind behind this conference, gave a very clear and inspired talk about the theme. She addressed the question of 'relationships' (to the divine, to one another and to the earth) as being the core of being human. In Social Therapy, when coworkers come they often first feel pity and tend to want to do things for those in their care out of thinking that this will help them. Gradually this may turn into empathy, and then they will do things with them based on understanding. This may then become reverence for the becoming human being and engagement out of insight and experience. The 4th stage would then be love for the goal out of practical reason.

Paulamaria then also introduced why ACESTA was so important and touched on various themes, such as 'collaboration' (working with); 'association' (willingness to be social and to share); 'cooperation' (teamwork) and discussed their Michaelic and Ahrimanic extremes.

There were three impressive talks on the theme by Joan Sleight, who is a member of the Executive Council at the Goetheanum. She is a Camphill staff child who grew up in South Africa. She is also Karl König's granddaughter. Joan's talks were quite amazing in how she linked the three issues (see title)- with which we are dealing on a daily basis- to our own weaknesses, such as fear, anger and doubt, and how regulations are trying to counter the effects of these weaknesses and often act out of the very same weaknesses themselves. Joan also gave suggestions on

how we could live with the regulations we are faced with, while at the same time accepting them and 'complying' rather than feeling trapped by them. For instance: 'Safeguarding: Trusting Anxiety', can be faced by "courage, wakefulness and fire of thinking, as well as mindfulness of the needs of the earth and one's fellow human beings"; 'Succession: Cooperating with Competition' can be achieved through "Developing real encounters with and through one another"; 'Governance: Doubting the silent presence' can be helped by "Fearlessness and courage for spirit-imbued deeds for the earth".

Joan's notes on her talks are available to ACESTA members as are the notes of the introductory talk by Paulamaria and notes of Richard Steel's concluding address. (Please contact me if you wish to receive a copy of these notes).

Simon Blaxland de Lange gave an introduction to the Michael Letters (Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts) as these letters are very pertinent to our time and relate to Michael and Ahriman.

Constantin Court (Ruskin Mill) organised discussion groups on various aspects related to the conference theme such as Leadership, Governance, Regulations, etc and the conversations were very lively.

At the centre of this conference there was a wonderful exhibition of most of Greg Tricker's paintings on Kaspar Hauser (there are 39 of them), which had been brought over from Berlin by Richard Steel, the driving force behind the Karl König Archives, which is now also incorporating the 'Kaspar Hauser Research Circle'. Richard gave a very inspiring workshop on the work of the Research Circle and in the last session we were privileged to meet the artist himself for an hour and had an inspiring conversation with him. Greg is an interesting, very intuitive person and he lived very strongly with the being of Kaspar Hauser for quite some time, giving rise to these pictures. He described that it all started with a sense of great darkness and then a 'scratching'. His first picture had literally been scratched out of a black background and, as the series continued, ever more light appeared.

It was very poignant having the innocence and mystery of Kaspar Hauser at the centre of our conference where we discussed and tried to understand the destiny and future of our work with children and adults

with learning disabilities and its place in society and in our time and we were very grateful to Richard Steele for making this possible.

The last talk in the conference was by Richard Steel on 'Karl König in our time'. It was the first Sunday in the Ten Days and Richard's talk was very much like a Whitsun address. He touched on various aspects of the conference.

Richard ended his talk with a quote from Rudolf Steiner's lecture 'Love and its meaning in the World' given on Dec. 17th 1912, hundred years after Kaspar Hauser's birth and on his death date!

'True love is the will impulse in your interest.'

Then he pointed to the Camphill logo: the Whitsun dove descending!

Edeline

(NB. If you wish to find out more about ACESTA or want to become an associative member so you can support our work of organising interesting conferences and symposia for information and CPD, you are welcome to contact me: elefevre01@gmail.com)