

Personal and confidential

Dear Attorney Gendotti, [it was Minister (Culture) of Ticino Republic]

First of all, I would like to thank you for coming to Eranos with your colleagues. Your visit and dedication give hope to us—those committed to ensuring that the Foundation does not disappear—and to the entire movement that cherishes Eranos and its spirit.

Allow me to write this brief memo to provide you with important information in preparation for your future efforts to save the Foundation and to facilitate your work during negotiations. Clearly, these are details that should be handled with the utmost discretion and caution, and since I am neither an accountant nor an auditor, they may need further verification.

This gesture stems from the firm will of both myself and Ms. Binda to fight together to save and revitalize the Foundation—not only for the people of Ticino but also for global culture.

A few words on the spirit of Eranos:

"Who remembers Eranos, its meaning, its secret, the spirit that animated those gatherings for years, since 1933, in Olga Froebe's villa in Ascona, on the shores of Lake Maggiore? Carl Gustav Jung, Karl Kerényi, Martin Buber, Erich Neumann, Henri-Charles Puech, Henry Corbin, Mircea Eliade, Walter Otto, Giuseppe Tucci, Louis Massignon, Gilbert Durand—these were just some of the most devoted guests who turned that place into the crucible of 20th-century European culture.

[...]

Above all, we came into contact with the spirit of Eranos—its meaning and its secret: the idea of a true community of speakers and listeners who gathered to share sacred nourishment (the name Eranos comes from the Greek éranos, a simple meal where each person brings their own food to be ritually consumed within the community). A shared purpose inspired each of the lecturers, from different disciplines: 'to present what they deemed essential for the human being in search of self-knowledge—that is, in pursuit of the full appreciation of all human experiences that hold a permanent and eternal meaning.' (H. Corbin)." (Maria Pia Rosati).

Scattered across the world—but especially in Europe, Japan, and America—many people and institutions had already given up on the Foundation. Now, a new hope is spreading among those close to and supportive of Eranos. University professors, academic institutions, individuals interested in knowledge, and companies that publish books and other materials linked to the Foundation form a diverse community looking to the revival of Eranos with both hope and critical scrutiny, given the administrative and content-related challenges of the recent past. This is a sensitive and attentive community that maintains connections through the Foundation's secretariat and myself.

Listening to these voices is not easy—it requires great attention and involvement. I ask you to take this into account, as saving the property while stripping the Foundation of its meaning is not our goal. Those of us who, for various reasons, seek the contact and support of public institutions do so with the aim of preserving not only the physical space but also the profound essence of Eranos.

A Few Words on the Current Administrative Situation:

From the Foundation's side, in an official or semi-official capacity, only two of us remain: the secretary, Ms. Binda, and myself, along with, of course, the sole administrator, Ms. Danioth. Unfortunately, Ms. Danioth has openly stated that she took on the position solely to settle the Foundation's debts by selling its properties. Ms. Danioth, Ms. Robinson, the Volkart Stiftung, and the Federal Supervisory Commission all support selling off the real estate holdings and closing the matter entirely.

Recently, however, in response to my efforts and the historical significance of potentially saving the Foundation, Ms. Danioth has allowed an attempt to rescue it. Other administrators involved in previous management phases can no longer contribute, except as historical witnesses or by assuming their financial responsibilities.

From the information I have, the Foundation's notary is Attorney Caimi, not Mr. Schiesser, who appears to act only as a mentor and personal lawyer for Ms. Danioth.

Future Prospects:

The sale of the house in Brè, set to take place in two weeks, now seems almost certain, with only the final price left to be negotiated. The estimated 250,000–300,000 CHF from this sale will likely go toward fulfilling various written commitments made by the Foundation to both past and current administrators—commitments that, in part, were granted as recognition for the significant personal efforts they put into running the Foundation.

Ms. Danioth is again discussing the sale of Casa Shanti. It appears that the federal commission has already granted permission for this transaction. This is an operation that must be stopped at all costs, as it would severely limit Eranos' operational capacity. Of the estimated 1.5–1.8 million CHF from the sale:

- 500,000 CHF would go to the Volkart Stiftung in retroactive interest if Casa Shanti is sold.
- The rest would likely be used to cover off-balance-sheet claims from past and present administrators.

I fear that little would be left for the Foundation itself—aside from the usual debts.

Ms. Danioth has asked me to prepare a business plan for Mr. Schiesser, which he would then present to her during your potential meeting in Bern. I told Ms. Danioth that you would likely inquire first and foremost about her intentions regarding the future structure of the Foundation.

A proposal is currently being drafted for an operational plan, which would include surveying the property's layout and sections, as well as digitizing the most important texts in the library.

Together with Professor Claudio Bonvecchio, I am expected to organize **Tagungen** (academic conferences) in the fall on the theme: **"War and the Sacred."**

From my conversation with a member of the Volkart Stiftung's Board of Trustees and statements from Ms. Danioth, there is a possibility that the Volkart Stiftung might be willing to reduce its claims by **1 million CHF** in exchange for a structured debt repayment plan.

General Secretariat / Foundation Supervisory Authority – Department of the Interior:

In the minutes of the meeting held in Bern on **March 10, 1992** (Attorney Lanini representing the Foundation), the commission stated:

"There are also concerns about the financial situation of the Foundation. One does not wish for the Foundation to suddenly find itself stripped of its assets."

In the **1994 activity report**, it was noted:

"However, we take the liberty of recommending a more cautious and prudent management of the Foundation's assets. In particular, cost containment is currently an absolute necessity."

Finally, on **December 21, 2001**, a letter addressed to Wanda Luban stated:

"The financial situation is very concerning. [...] Another solution is the partial or total sale of the properties."

It leaves one speechless... especially considering other documents I have uncovered.

Off-Balance-Sheet Items:

There are three off-balance-sheet positions that have been reported to me:

- **350,000 CHF**

Requested by Ms. Danioth from the Foundation for donations recorded as such by the former director and administrator, Mr. Ritsema. Ms. Danioth had told me that she would ask Mr. Schiesser to intervene with the supervisory authority to have the credit recognized, claiming that she had been deceived by Ritsema. However, documents exist—such as a statement for the tax office—proving that Ms. Danioth was fully aware that she had made donations, not deposits.

Of the **635,000 CHF** that Ms. Danioth had contributed to the Foundation in total, approximately **300,000 CHF** has already been reimbursed to her through an agreement (*Vereinbarung*) between the Foundation and the Volkart Stiftung (*Abtretungsvertrag*).

Out of this **300,000 CHF**, only **82,000 CHF + 5,000 CHF** are listed in the balance sheet as deposits. The rest were recognized as retirement benefits, fees, and expenses (including **50,000 CHF in 1999 alone**).

Within the **635,000 CHF**, there is also an anonymous **300,000 CHF donation** recorded in the balance sheet, which was actually made by Ms. Danioth—I have the bank document proving this.

It is therefore evident that there is an intent to reclaim all the money contributed to the Foundation.

- **750,000 CHF**

Requested through Ms. Danioth by the former administrator, Ms. Robinson, for a **right of residence and usufruct** over Casa Gabriella. This was allegedly granted as recognition for her *generous act* of providing the Foundation with a **4% mortgage loan** while she was in office. These funds were spent by her during her presidency and later reimbursed to her under the **February 28, 2000, contract** between the Foundation and the Volkart Stiftung (*Abtretungsvertrag*).

The **750,000 CHF** amount is based on a **highly questionable appraisal**. Furthermore, Ms. Robinson **owes the Foundation approximately 250,000 CHF**

for interest and the management of Casa Gabriella (she likely has no idea about this liability).

- **Legal Fees for Mr. Schiesser**

Not yet quantified, but incurred for assisting Ms. Danioth over the past years.

A Few Words About My Position

I confirm that, until your anticipated meeting with Mr. Schiesser in Bern takes place, I will not take any further official steps. I kindly ask you to keep me informed about the meeting.

In recent days, several newspaper articles have been published. I have tried to remain vague. We have an appointment with **Radio Rete 2** in about **2-3 weeks**.

At this moment, I am experiencing a strong internal conflict regarding how to deal with **Eranos' past administration**, the **Foundation Supervisory Authority**, and the **attempt by the Volkart Stiftung to acquire the Foundation's properties at a low price** (documents exist showing negotiations based on **4.5 million CHF**). I feel responsible for all the documents in my possession that could contribute to saving the Foundation.

However, my objective remains **clear**: to save the Foundation and **revive the spirit** that characterized the actions of its founder. To achieve this, I am fully prepared to **collaborate** in finding a long-term solution that satisfies all stakeholders (**the Foundation, the Canton, the Municipality, etc.**) and to adhere to jointly made decisions.

I remain available for any **clarification or proposal meeting**.

Final Considerations

It would be desirable for all involved if the presidency of the Foundation were entrusted to a person unconnected to its past administration (but still an expression of the Foundation itself) and highly aware of today's financial and administrative realities. Achieving this might require a coordinated effort.

I am enclosing some documents that should facilitate your work, with the strong recommendation of utmost discretion, as any premature disclosure could lead to sudden retaliatory actions.

Please accept my deepest esteem and my gratitude for what you are doing for the spirit of Eranos.

Daniele Bonetti

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Ascona, April 17, 2003

Dear Mrs. Vera Balsiger,

About two months ago, I received a written and signed mandate from the current sole administrator of the Eranos Foundation (Mrs. Maria Danioth) to make contact and initiate negotiations with all parties I deem important in order to resolve the current issues of the Eranos Foundation.

To achieve the goal of saving the Eranos Foundation and revitalizing its activities, a meeting with your director, Mr. Gendotti, and Dr. Martinoni is essential.

Given the international importance of the Eranos Foundation and its still-existing potential, as a Ticinese, I have been working to build consensus and a coordinated effort to keep the Eranos Foundation alive.

In this perspective, the meeting on Tuesday, April 29, 2003, aims to clarify (and present to the Canton) the past, present, and future organizational and financial situation of the Foundation. Furthermore, it will address the possible future activities of the Foundation, for which I already have concrete feedback. The goal is to find a way to ensure that Ticino does not lose this institution by setting up a coordinated action among the various stakeholders (Foundation, Municipality, Canton, etc.). Essentially, this meeting should discuss a possible (and highly desirable) close collaboration to save the Eranos Foundation.

A possible agenda could be:

- **2:00 PM:** Arrival of Director Mr. Gendotti and Dr. Martinoni.
If necessary, we can meet, for example, in the large parking lot below the Monte Verità seminar center and then proceed together to Eranos.
- **Visit to the Eranos property on the lakeshore in Ascona,**
with a presentation by the Foundation's secretary, Mrs. Binda.
- **Meeting in the guest hall with the following agenda items:**
 - History of the Foundation (organizational and financial)
 - Presentation of initiatives taken so far
 - Possible future scenarios (organizational, financial, and operational)
 - Definition of a common strategy
- **Closing of the meeting**

At least 2, preferably 3 hours, should be allocated for this meeting.

I will be present on behalf of the Eranos Foundation. The sole administrator is ill and hospitalized. There are no other positions within the Foundation apart from two lawyers and notaries, whose roles are not relevant to this meeting.

Director Mr. Gendotti and Dr. Martinoni will be present, as well as the municipal representative of Ascona, Mrs. Paola Cerutti.

Thank you for your valuable cooperation.

Best regards,

Bonetti Daniele

P.S.: For the distribution of this letter within the cantonal administration, I trust your discretion.