



Survey of Who is Doing What?

How we met the Economics Course

ECONOMICS CONFERENCE
Report of the 4th Annual Meeting

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This meeting was held at the Goetheanum, Dornach (Basel), Switzerland, 30 June – 1 July 2005

Attended by 22 people from 7 countries (with 8 apologies), the 4th meeting of the Economics Conference was conducted in English and German. Following a welcome from Paul Mackay on behalf of the Goetheanum, Christopher Houghton Budd introduced the 2-day gathering with a review of the development of the Economics Conference to date and of the listening culture that had so far prevailed, the idea being to work in such a way that we build together a content worthy of a response from Michael. He went on to share some thoughts on the need to accord the economics course the same status as the other ‘professional’ courses, the importance of making the course, rather than interpretations of it, our clear starting point, and, to this end, the need to identify more precisely the ways in which our activities are rooted in the course. In regard to current events, he also asked three questions: How do things stand with regard to Anglo-American dominion? Are we numerous enough to have any effect? And how strong is the Michael Thought in the field of economics?

The main aim of the short time spent together was twofold – to hear who is doing what in connection with the economics course and to look more closely at the course overall. The first part was accomplished by brief descriptions in the introductions and an evening spent listening to the participants’ accounts of their work. The second aspect turned out to be something of a *tour de force*. Aiming to do no more than share the essential gestures of the course, we in fact found ourselves entering into details. As a result, we only managed to cover the first seven lectures, although this was felt to be a natural pause point. The remaining seven lectures will be carried over to the next meeting.

Here is not the place to record the rich tapestry that began to unfold, but it was clear to all that not only does the economics course unfold as a process, but also that this process is probably linked to the deeper nature of the human being and his relationship to the spiritual world, albeit in this case through the medium of economic phenomena.

Suggestions for further work included comparing Steiner’s ideas to current thinking and practices, and the development of formal courses in associative economics, especially as regards the teaching of economics in schools.

During the meeting the following references were cited: *On forms of philosophy and awareness of the threefold character of social life*: "The New Spirituality and the Christ Experience of the Twentieth Century." First of seven lectures, Dornach 17-31 October 1920. Published Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1988. (GA 200) And: "The Time Sequence and Spiritual Foundation of Threefolding." First of two lectures, Dornach 23 & 29 March 1919. (GA 190) Published Mercury Press, New York 1998. *On the money markets*: "...the

emancipation of the money market for the goods market, dating roughly from the period 1810-1815.” Essay on 15 September 1920. (GA 24)

A third meeting is being planned for 20/21 June 2004. A theme suggested in the recent Section meeting in Dornach (21-23 November 2003) was “What do we understand by ‘economics’?” It is also to be hoped that we can broaden the main languages to include French, thus helping give the work a more cosmopolitan culture. Any member of the School interested in attending should contact the Social Sciences Section secretariat at the Goetheanum.