



## **Newsletter of the Economics Conference**

Part of the Social Sciences  
Section of the School of  
Spiritual Science

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#### *Editor*

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The aim of this publication is to encourage colleagues within the School of Spiritual Science to meet, share their work with one another, and where possible build a common culture in this field. It offers commentary, reports and news from a spiritual scientific point of view and provides a link between those who approach modern economic life in this way.

Associate does not proselytise or establish a 'party line' as regards the School of Spiritual Science and modern economic life. Responsibility for the views expressed, as also for their accuracy, rests solely with their authors.

Contributions should be as succinct as possible. Where appropriate, the editorial right is reserved to publish abstracts with a fuller version available on request. Contributors are asked to provide their name, profession and address.

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### **6th Annual Meeting / Finance in the Anthroposophical Movement**

Some people have wondered why this topic has been chosen when we could be looking further at Steiner's economics in the light of today's economic events. But is not the financing of the anthroposophical movement itself one of today's key economic events in the sense that it is fundamentally about how people can direct money, and thus their will forces, to provide the earthly wherewithal for the practical unfolding of the anthroposophical conception of the world? In a time when most money flows, little touched by the insights of Rudolf Steiner, are linked to self-interest and the pursuit of material gain, it is surely important to pay heed to his ideas and own practices when it comes to the very movement developed in his name.

For the next Goetheanum meeting, 20 and 21 September, several people have offered contributions, and the two days will be organised to take full account of the ideas and suggestions they contain. Key thoughts from Rudolf Steiner at the time of the Christmas Conference concern the basis of the membership fee and Society budget (28 December 1923) and the question of Van Leer concerning the role of external associations.

Bearing in mind that some people will have travelled considerable distances to take part, and that the second day finishes at 5pm, I would also like to suggest a further evening session on the 21st to review the development and future of the Economics Conference. **If you would like to take part in such a session please let me know c/o [economics@goetheanum.org](mailto:economics@goetheanum.org).**

### **Pomona, USA**

Under the joint auspices of the Economics Conference, the Social Sciences Section in North America and Associative Economics North America, 22 members of the School came together for 5 days in February outside Los Angeles to rehearse the entire *Economics Course* of Rudolf Steiner. The impulse for this came from Pamela Sophia John, a Conference participant, and was born of the 2005 Dornach meeting when as a next step in our work we began to overview the course as a whole. Jesse Osmer wrote: "Each morning, 4-5 participants gave 15-minute summaries of the lectures, which were then the content for smaller discussion groups. In the afternoons, artistic activities were followed by plenums. The evenings were a chance for participants to present projects ranging from the Associative Economic Guarantee Mark to Choice in Education Tax Credits, from a Pre-funded (endowment based) K-8 school to International Accounting Standards." (A fuller report is available for anyone interested.)

### **Thailand**

Around 20 people took part in the Economics and Threefolding Workshop organised by Hans van Willenswaard in Thailand at the end of April. Participants included bankers, farmers and NGO activists, and came from several Asian countries. Considerable attention was given to the problems of small-scale organic farmers and the wider question of agricultural certification. We also heard first hand about the situation in Myanmar (Burma) and looked at examples of threefolding in modern economics. One theme that did not, however, get explored in the depth it perhaps merited was the comparison of Buddhist economics and associative economics. For a full report, please contact Hans via <[hans@gnh-movement.org](mailto:hans@gnh-movement.org)>.

### **Britain**

A very successful day was spent on 7th July commemorating the work of Walter Johannes Stein. Several people who knew him personally evoked

strong memories of his life and work, especially as regards economics. The day proceeded to look at the ways in which Stein's work with Dunlop could be followed up, it having become something of a forgotten trail in the anthroposophical movement, as also in economic life generally.

A similar day in May was spent celebrating the work of Owen Barfield. In the 1930s, both Stein and Barfield were among several anthroposophists who actively sought to promote threefold ideas and especially associative economics in the English-speaking world.

One of Stein's more vital observations was the need for independent research, something that remains a 'hot topic' even today, where it is well-known that economists not in support of the neo-liberal approach find it hard to find funding or get published. Partly with this in mind, an Associative Economics Research Fund has recently been set up c/o Hermes Trust in Stroud, the 'gift money' sister of Triodos Bank (formerly Mercury Provident).

#### **At the Goetheanum**

Five seminars were held at the Goetheanum in the first half of 2007. Although the original idea of involving different speakers did not quite work out, the events were attended by a regular group of participants, both local to Dornach and visitors from around the world.

Nothing is as yet planned for 2007/8, but it is hoped to continue the work begun these past few years by bringing in other speakers and broadening the range of topics. If anyone would like to suggest themes or make a contribution, please get in touch.

#### **Barcelona, Spain**

From 24th to 29th July in the hills above Barcelona, the Anthroposophical Society in Spain hosted a public conference on socio-economic questions in the light of anthroposophy. The lectures, given by Christopher Houghton Budd and translated by Joaquin Castro, took as their theme *Economic life from the point of view of the I of man*. The event provided an opportunity for intense collaboration which included members of the Council of the Spanish Society and also featured a mass exercise by 60 people (!), most of whom were not anthroposophists, who worked out together the accounting entries of a donation from A to B, with B using the money in part to buy buildings, with the rest spent on remuneration. The aim was to understand how a gift takes place in today's world in order to examine to what extent donations and their use comport with Steiner's idea of 'gift money'.

#### **Rudolf Steiner on the Radar**

In the English-speaking world, Rudolf Steiner's ideas in the field of economics have little presence in public debates or academic discourse. Perhaps the most direct presentation of his ideas is the 2006 paper by Dr. Guido Preparata of Washington State University, USA, on *Perishable Money in a Threefold Commonwealth: Rudolf Steiner and the Social Economics of an Anarchist Utopia*.

But in Britain, where Daniel Dunlop began to make direct links between spiritual science and western

economic life, Steiner remains off the radar. Now, however, more concerted efforts are underway to draw attention to Steiner's work, especially in the field of monetary economics, and thus to step again on the path indicated by Dunlop:

- a paper by Christopher Houghton Budd on Steiner's economics and accounting will be presented in August at the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

- the regular studies in London of associative economics will move to the London School of Economics (a prestigious venue founded by the original translators into English of Steiner's book on the threefold social order). This is thanks to an anthroposophical colleague who has a professorship at LSE.

- Arthur Edwards will begin an MPhil, possibly extending to a doctorate, at Buckingham University, where he will consider Steiner's ideas on money as a basis for modern monetary policy. His thesis has been accepted by a professor of high standing in financial and policy circles.

In these ways, an interface is being developed between Steiner's work directly and current mainstream, rather than alternative, economics, as seems fitting, given Rudolf Steiner's description of the task of spiritual science to lead on from where the natural sciences leave off.

#### **Communication and Texts**

Jutta Vollmer from Germany has written to suggest that contributions made at the Dornach meetings be recorded and made available in written form for subsequent study and wider use. If you have any views on this, or, perhaps more importantly, would like to help make it possible, please get in touch via [economics@goetheanum.org](mailto:economics@goetheanum.org).

With this in mind, the Economics Conference webpage has recently been modified, while the Anthromedia/economics page (see next item) can also play a part.

#### **Anthromedia and Economics**

Combining the functions of a portal and press office, the Anthromedia site has recently been revamped by Economics Conference participant, Jesse Osmer. The English version of its economics page is entrusted to another participant, Arthur Edwards, whose aim is to provide a catholic overview of associative economics in the world at large, based on information received. Arthur would welcome contributions and comments.

[anthromedia.com/home/economics](http://anthromedia.com/home/economics)  
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#### **New Participants**

Gordon Edwards, Chicago, USA.

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