



Newsletter of the Economics Conference

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

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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 location.

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CONTENTS

**Meetings
2006
Biographies
News and Views
Comparative Study
AE means...
Teaching Economics
Report**

DEAR COLLEAGUE,

Michaelmas seems a good time to write to you concerning the Economics Conference and to do so by way of this first edition of the Conference's newsletter, *Associate*, which will be published occasionally in both hard and electronic format. The aim is to provide a means for participants in the Conference to get to know of one another and who is doing what, as well as a forum for discussion. By keeping the newsletter simple and succinct it will be possible to produce versions in French, German and English.

Michaelmas Greetings and all strength for your endeavours!

MEETINGS

47 people have so far signed up and participated in the work of the Conference. As this project gradually grows, we hope more colleagues will participate and, indeed, feel emboldened to meet as and when circumstance arises anywhere in the world. (As well as the Dornach events, two such meetings have been held in the UK, for example, with more planned. Exploratory meetings will be held in North America – probably San Francisco and Toronto - in February 2006.) If meetings are held, it would be appreciated if their details and any report could be sent to economics@goetheanum.org, with permission to publish them on the Conference website and in this newsletter.

2006

The 4th annual meeting was held at the Goetheanum, 30th June and 1st July - see report in this issue. The dates for the 2006 meeting have been provisionally set for 11 and 12 August, just prior to the summer conference on the Fundamental Social Law.

BIOGRAPHIES

Associate provides a medium for publishing brief biographies of participants. If you are willing to have yours published, please send not more than 100 words to economics@goetheanum.org with the rubric 'Bio for publication'. A picture is also welcome. If you are willing to have published a short version of the biography you already submitted, please let us know.

NEWS AND VIEWS

We would like to invite a range of contributions by members of the School of Spiritual Science active in the fields of economics, business and finance. These could be reports of lectures, synopses of publications, descriptions of activities, or commentaries on issues of the day. Such items would serve to build a sense of what is happening around the world in the name of spiritual science, but it could also serve as a resource for Waldorf schools, bio-dynamic farms and all manner of economic activities.

COMPARATIVE STUDY

Marc C. Theurillat, a Conference participant living in Basel, Switzerland, has undertaken a comparative study of Rudolf Steiner's ideas and current thinking in modern economic and business life, currently only in German. For further information, please contact Marc C. Theurillat direct at mctbs@bluewin.ch.

'ASSOCIATIVE ECONOMICS' MEANS...

The term 'associative economics' is used by many people, both within and without the anthroposophical movement. At its most general, therefore, it does not only refer to a spiritual scientific approach to economics. For the avoidance of doubt and our own variety of interpretations notwithstanding, in this context the term is used to refer to economic life as understood on the basis outlined by Rudolf Steiner in the course he gave on economics in 1922.

TEACHING ECONOMICS

In response to a request from a teacher in England for help in devising an economics curriculum, a project has begun to encourage teachers, economists and others practically engaged in teaching economics to teenagers to compare notes concerning the content and methods used. The hope is to benefit from the mutually sharing of experience and to distil some guidelines, especially in regard to associative economics and the current 'default' concept of the market, which in many cases is the economics taught, Steiner's evident concerns in this regard notwithstanding. The project is email based, but a meeting was held in London in July involving several members of the Economics Conference and including the comments of other colleagues active in teaching economics in Waldorf schools. We hope others will share in this work, the fruits of which need not only be confined to Waldorf schools, of course.

REPORT

4th Meeting of the Economics Conference, 30th June and 1st July, 2005, Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland¹

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, provisionally planned for 11 & 12 August, 2006, directly before the Social Sciences Section conference on the fundamental social law.

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.

Christopher Houghton Budd
Economics Conference Convenor

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)

¹ Another report by a participant, Arthur Edwards, has also been published in *Anthroposophy Worldwide*, September 2005.