



Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

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

Newsletter | February 2012

Convenor: Christopher Houghton Budd, PhD | Email: economics@goetheanum.org | www.economics.goetheanum.org

Dear Colleagues,

you will already have received or seen in Anthroposophy Worldwide a report on the September gathering at L'Aubier, shortly after which a meeting took place between Paul Mackay, Marc Desaulles and myself. The immediate outcome of this was to set up a series of one-day meetings with a small group of people to consider the relationship between the money markets and the goods market in the light of Rudolf Steiner's observation that modern financial conditions are the result of "the emancipation of the money-market from the goods-market, dating roughly from the period 1810-1815." (15.9.1920) In the following paragraphs news of this and other items are summarised, taken from a mix of information sent to me, emails I have participated in and developments I have met in my travels.

Best wishes,

Christopher Houghton Budd

Reconnecting the Money and the Goods Markets (Annual Theme)

One question is whether emancipation has become separation and, in the event that it has, whether the two aspects of economic life can be reconnected. Clearly, there is much in Steiner's economics course that indicates how this can be done, at least conceptually. But the question is what can be done in practice in today's circumstances, and what are we doing in our own movement? To be specific, in what ways do banks and foundations, both within and without the anthroposophical movement, address this problem?

Apart from the meetings with Paul Mackay, it seemed right to take this as the theme for 2012, to which end events on the topic have already been held in Brazil and Argentina. The next annual meeting (see below) will also touch on this theme. And it would be wonderful if other events or papers could take it up.

11th Annual Meeting, 21 to 24 September 2012

At L'Aubier, Neuchatel, Switzerland

This year's annual meeting will again take place at L'Aubier, limited to members of the School. As the inner aspect of the annual theme, it will consider the question:

What stands in the way of humanity cohering its will forces? How do individuals meet the challenge of not doing what they want but what is needed?

Economic life cannot be based on serving oneself, but on meeting the needs of others and of the world economy as such. Clearly, the outer challenge of our times is to overcome the separation of the money market from the goods market, but this entails a disciplining of the will. Instead of free will alone, we need to develop *free and responsible* will. Indeed, can a will that is not responsible be truly free? This meeting will consider the inner aspect of this problem and ask how participants experience it in connection with their practical economic lives.

To register, please contact *Marc Desaulles*:

L'AUBIER, Les Murailles 5, CH-2037 Montezillon, Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Email: contact@aubier.ch Tel: +41 32 732 22 12 Fax +41 32 732 22 00

Circles

The L'Aubier meeting has been scheduled prior to the Michaeli Conference at the Goetheanum in order to facilitate attendance at both on the part of those who come from afar. This touches on two important questions: (1) How is the Economics Conference related to the questions of the Classes, and (2) how can

members of the Economics Conference work together globally, even though we are physically far flung and few in number?

One way to approach both questions is to consider the work of Jurgen Smit (see p.10 of the attached text) in which he discusses working in circles. When, for instance, members of the School deliberate on the Lessons of the First Class, as distinct from receiving their content, is this an example of what he had in mind? And is this perhaps linked to the question of the Second Class that the Hochschule Collegium plans to consider at Michaelmas?

When we meet in the annual Economics Conference gatherings, is this not also such a circle, the more so because the last three gatherings have been restricted to members of the School? Can one go further in this spirit and see the Economics Conference membership as a whole, albeit only via its website and this newsletter, as the working together of a virtual worldwide circle? As such, how can its presence be more felt?

One way, it seems to me, is that we severally take up the annual theme – either holding meetings about it or writing articles. This is what Stan Whipple is doing in South Africa, for example.

Another way is whatever is needed to find ourselves on the one page. For example, whether it would help to have some 'official' entry for associative economics in Encyclopaedia Britannica or on Wikipedia. In that event, who would write it and how would we severally agree or 'own' what was written? In the Encyclopaedia Britannica model, someone would be commissioned. In the Wiki model it would be achieved by way of 'democratised knowledge'. Whichever way it was done, this would be an opportunity for deliberate, shared, worldwide chewing of the cud concerning how we understand associative economics, or whatever other name we give to economics in the light of spiritual science. (I use associative economics as the 'brand' for Steiner's economics course analogously to biodynamic farming for the agriculture course.)

An important aspect of this would be if a listing could be achieved in a mainstream reference, for then one would be subject to scholarly, albeit materialistic, scrutiny. But thereby, too, associative economics would come on the radar in a way that might only be fruitful.

This, in the realm of ideas.

Economics Conference Account

In the realm of will, we are concerned not only with money, but with how – in our own dealings – we behave. What talk do we walk? In this connection, I can report that there are now several Economics Conference Accounts (see list) whereby the Anthroposophical Society or a 'sister' organisation in different countries has an Economics Conference Account, coordinated by a member of the Economics Conference, on the basis of the Goetheanum Fund idea (see www.fondsgoetheanum.ch), namely 50% of funds stay in the country of origin for research there and 50% go to the Goetheanum. The funds sought are subject to protocols (see below), with the aim of promoting publishable, up-to-date contributions to key issues of our time in the light of spiritual science.

Country	Host Entity	Coordinator	Balances at 31.12.11	
			<i>Country</i>	<i>World (approx.)</i>
Goetheanum	GAS	Christopher Houghton Budd	CHF 2096.50	CHF 3,787.94
UK	Hermes Trust	Arthur Edwards	GBP 599.21	GBP 2,630.52
US	AS in America	Kim Chotzen	USD 311.00	USD 4,156.22
Brazil	AS in Brazil	Lucia Sigolo	BRL 960.00	

Accounts are also being established in Argentina, New Zealand, Australia and Hungary. Having set up the channels, some events have already been held to raise funds, and the balances reflect this. The next step is to increase the amounts that flow through the accounts. This in itself is a metric on the presence of the work of the Economics Conference – in our own minds, of course, but also in the eyes of the world because, in that it needs to be worthy of public dissemination, what arises makes spiritual scientific research subject to scrutiny in terms of today's 'normal' understanding of things.

Economics Conference Account Protocols

As currently formulated through discussions among various members, the following protocols or policies govern the conduct of the Economics Conference Account:

1. Any monies donated in a *general or unspecified* way will be disbursed:
 - a. at the discretion of the EC Account coordinator
 - b. for research into bona fide economics with specific reference to Rudolf Steiner
 - c. in a context of submitted budgets and for the purposes stated in those budgets
 - d. including remuneration of the researcher(s) as specified in the budgeted research project
 - e. with the requirement of public access to the results, either through publication or other media.

2. The EC Account can also be used to channel *designated* monies, in which case the Coordinator's only discretion is to ensure that the purpose of such monies is within its mission, namely research into economics with specific reference to Rudolf Steiner.
3. The EC Account can also be used to distribute monies to and receive monies from other EC Accounts or funds whose purposes coincide with its own.

Research = Archive

The above protocols having been devised, it seems to me (and I am therefore proposing) that the way the world meets associative economics research is in the form of an archive. This would have three main elements:

- 1) the work of Rudolf Steiner
- 2) the work others in the field of associative economics
- 3) future work.

As things stand, a number of people are currently doing such work. In order to avoid duplication of effort, my proposal is that funds be raised so that the archive created by the Economics Conference (currently headed 'Literature' on its website) can be expanded as a world resource on the part of the School, with such links to other similar endeavours as are practicable.

Project 2023 and Anthroposophical Society Accounts

Insofar as the Economics Conference Account is being developed in the light of the Goetheanum Fund and as a contribution to Project 2023, it can be seen as a sliver of a worldwide concept, brought to life by the research being undertaken and the generosity of those who then make the necessary funds available.

As another contribution to this project, Lucia Sigolo (the Society treasurer in Brazil) and Christopher Houghton Budd have begun a comparative study of the accounts of the Anthroposophical Society worldwide to see (a) in what way they are conceived and operated, (b) to what extent they are similar, and (c) whether one can discern anything archetypal in them. This is a comparatively easy process to begin, as it entails only the collection of data and putting it into a spreadsheet. We aim to continue the data collection this year and then to share our thoughts with all concerned.

Associate!

A Monthly Digest from the World of Associative Economics

Since its inception in May 1980, this journal has had various 'incarnations' until its current one, with its title an allusion to the need to take action now to make economic life more and more associative. In 1990 it became bi-monthly and since 2005 has been monthly. Its main editors are Arthur Edwards and Christopher Houghton Budd and its spirit has always been to travel back and forth between actual events and the ideas of associative economics as developed on a basis of Rudolf Steiner's work. The idea is to build a bridge at least at the level of ideas between spiritual science and current realities. If you are not a subscriber and would like to become one, please look at the attached gratis copy and then go to www.cfae.biz/associate/.

The Unspoken Mission of John Maynard Keynes

How Rudolf Steiner's idea of 'world economy' finds its reflection in the work of the English economist, John Maynard Keynes

This will be the theme of three events in early summer – at the Goetheanum 25-26 May, London 5-7 June and Brussels 15-16 June. The essential double theme is that the 1919 Treaty of Versailles grounded modern economic life on the idea of 'self determination of peoples'. By this means, a contrary principle was introduced into human evolution. Instead of a single global economy (with its corresponding monetary arrangements), a rights life based on independent peoples, and a universally free spiritual life, the state came to dominate all three. Unscrambling this omelette is the key to resolving today's increasingly chaotic conditions.

Although a threefold understanding of social life is woefully absent from modern discourse, it is still urgently needed. Perception of it is hindered by the development of economic life since 1918, but it can be discerned in the work of John Maynard Keynes. From the Treaty of Versailles onwards, through his contribution to modern monetary theory, as equally to the design of today's monetary institutions, Keynes's approach to world economic affairs remains as relevant and as practicable as ever it was. By looking afresh at his work we can gain insights into today's financial crises.

Note: Such information as has been sent in is published here. Another medium for seeing or notifying what is going on is associative-economics.com.