

Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

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

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Dear Colleagues,

time will tell, but I feel this newsletter marks an important step change for the Economics Conference work. Kim Chotzen has agreed to shoulder some of my tasks, helping to make the team a worldwide affair as also to give it further presence in North America. Funds are beginning to flow, though the demand for research funding remains low. We have a new focus in Ireland, where the Irish Society is hosting an account, with its treasurer and country representative David Fairclough as our treasurer also. Rudolf Steiner's ideas in regard to modern economic and financial affairs are beginning to be the basis of seminars involving people both within the anthroposophical movement and also in academia. I see this as an important, but delicate bridge that needs building, but one that will not be supported by mere opinion or in-house jargon. At the same time, we seem to be entering into a world of visual events, which the photos chosen by Kim illustrate well – the end of economics as a dismal science!

Best wishes,

Christopher Houghton Budd

Dear Colleagues,

With this issue, I am wearing a new hat: I have agreed with Christopher to take on certain administrative tasks as a way of sharing the burden of the Economics Conference work. To date, this has been done gratis by him as convenor. Now, thanks to the Swiss Anthroposophical Society and the Swiss people for funds contributed for economics research, a portion of the Economics Conference Fund has been dedicated to administration and website upkeep. Christopher and I have agreed a budget for the administrative tasks I will do. I plan to present the details for review in Montreal.

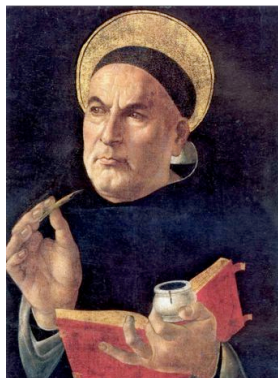
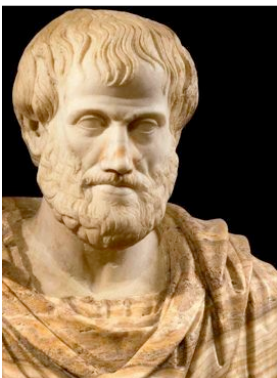
I am looking forward to this next step for the Economics Conference. I hope to present details of the significant research going on in many corners of the world to show that we are getting traction! All efforts made to center the economy through the work of the Economics Conference respond to the need expressed in the following words.

"This age in which we live has been obliged to entangle itself in a mass of errors, so that, through having to disentangle ourselves from them, we may become independent human beings." Rudolf Steiner

Spring greetings from the Northern Hemisphere to all!

Sincerely,

Kim (Chotzen)



14th Annual Meeting, 24 to 28 June 2015
Montreal, Canada

As long as...we are faithful to true price
Understanding the economic process

This year's 14th Annual Meeting of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum completes its three year stint in Montreal, with next year's location to be decided by participants. The decision taken two years ago to focus on Rudolf Steiner's economic course and the fact that we've met in the same location for several years have created a 'chalice' for considering Steiner's economics course as an outer expression of the path to the spiritual world, accessible to anyone with the will to follow. Keeping in mind that the goal of these studies is to bring about the threefold social order, but in the 'new language' brought in the economics lectures, we have considered the themes of true price and of lending with reliance on the human spirit. This year we will study the economic process as described in Lecture 7. The provisional programme is attached. Interested parties should contact France Beaucage: beaucagef356@gmail.com (copy, please, to economics@goetheanum.org)

Exhibitions

Associative economics made visible

One important development within the Economics Conference is the series of exhibitions which began in 2014 at L'Aubier, a center for associative economics in Montezillon, Switzerland. The current exhibition, the third in the series, entitled 'Rudolf Steiner, Economist,' summarizes Steiner's key economic ideas, considering also their modern implications. It will be displayed until June 5, 2015, when it will be followed by 'Of Wheat and Gold', which will treat themes of capital and farming. The previous two exhibitions dealt with the evolution of economic thought as expressed by Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Rudolf Steiner and a one-world economy as practically understood by Rudolf Steiner, Daniel Dunlop and John Maynard Keynes. These exhibitions are educational tools that represent an immense effort. They are each translated into three languages and their content distills many years of research into twelve cogently expressed panels.



Events in Carlow, Ireland

A conjunction of elements

Recently, the Steiner, Keynes and Dunlop exhibition was displayed in the gallery of VISUAL, Centre for Contemporary Art in Carlow, Ireland (26 Feb – 1 Mar). In their huge square white-walled gallery also hung some of Rudolf Steiner's blackboard drawings with his corresponding lectures in carefully catalogued books for browsers to read (see <http://www.visualcarlow.ie/exhibitions/info/cosmic-dust>). The story I heard was the director of the museum had seen the drawings at a show in Vienna and wished they could be displayed at VISUAL and on a different occasion, a man came to her and suggested she display Steiner's blackboard drawings! (I do believe the 'wee folk' in Ireland are still a force to be reckoned with!)



Colours of Money was presented at VISUAL during this time as well. It happened that a highly respected curator from the Tate Gallery, Lewis Biggs, who has taken an interest in the new Mini Money Museum in Folkestone, England (see paragraph below), was scheduled to consult with the VISUAL team the following month. This connection, as well as the inherent artistic interest of the *Colours of Money* black paper drawings led to them being hung after each session in the main entrance. It was quite interesting to work with the content – along with five members of the Council of the Anthroposophical Society in Ireland present – with Steiner's drawings in one room and Dunlop and Keynes in another.



The Earth as a basis of World Economy

Inspiration from Walter Johannes Stein and Daniel Dunlop

The three public evening lectures given by Christopher at VISUAL were each dedicated to one of the 'architects' of World Economy, as they were featured in the Steiner, Keynes and Dunlop exhibition. In different ways, each of these men contributed to practically restructuring the world economy – what had gone from small principalities that traded their surplus with each other in the 8th and 9th centuries, to nations balancing

trade with each other via the gold standard, all of which finally gave way, in 1913, to a global economy with no more borders for trade. Approximately 100 years later, with the financial crisis of 2008 still continuing, humanity now has a chance to recognize that the world *is* one inextricably linked economy. But is it a global economy for the power over which each nation vies or one to be shared by all of humanity?

In 1937, Walter Johannes Stein, in tribute to Daniel Dunlop, published a powerful little book called *The Earth as a Basis of World Economy*. The book was written by request of Dunlop as part of an organizing effort for a World Economy conference. It is both a scientific and poetic masterpiece that describes the Earth as an organism with intricately cohered systems. Its content and manner of presentation could inspire every high school student. Progress in the field of economics – leaving nationalist concepts behind – can only be made with such an image of world economy in the background. And when we act *as if* the world is one economy.

It can be downloaded at <http://www.thepresentage.net> in scanned form, and plans are being hatched to produce an edited version so that it sits in the context of today's situation.



Mini Money Museum

Where ideas count

Two-pence to start a youth fund can be placed in a jar after one records thoughts about the exhibition on display at the new Mini Money Museum in Folkestone, England. The first exhibition, in concert with International Women's Day on 8 March was entitled *When Women Count, stuff happens...as communicated to passers-by on the Old High Street by the thoughts of the Little Prince in the window.*



This museum, managed by 23 year old Charlie Hodgson as part of his entrepreneurial training, is part of Finance Folkestone, a four-year project to commemorate the young people who died in WWI. The next exhibition is *Colours of Money*. In May there will be the exhibition on *Steiner, Dunlop and Keynes*. Who knows, maybe we should do something like this in Montreal or the US.

Annual General Meeting

The organ of perception for an organization

Recently, several members of the Economics Conference attended the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland. It was informative and inspiring to experience the social harmony of this event, due in no small part to the finances being managed with a conscious reliance on the spirit of the members. This became apparent with the Treasurer's report and the way the financial statements were explained. The balance sheet was presented as a result of members' trust in the organization; the flow of funds through the accounts reflected an enormous amount of annual Society activity, all made possible through the direct financing of projects.

Travel Fund?

Christopher (Houghton Budd)

Over the years, I have been aware of people needing financial help for travel and of ideas about creating a travel fund. Others may have other ideas about this, but I thought I would share mine. Generally, I think they can be recipes for complications and unfulfillable expectations, unless (a) they have positive cash flow and (b) someone takes on to ensure that is the case. They also take up valuable work time, unless kept to one side. On

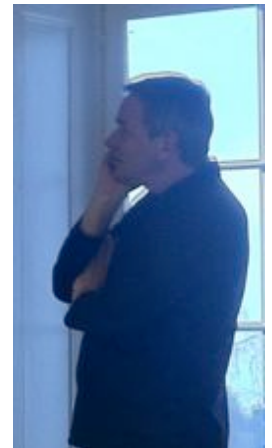
the other hand, I have several times taken on to do the following, and would be willing to do so at the Montreal meeting. Usually, the outcome is a net surplus, which would go, in this case, to the Economics Conference Fund. At the start of the second morning I pass round slips for those who want to do so to write on them the amount of their travel. In the break I then total this amount and share it at the start of the next session. At that point I pass round a second slip for people to say how much they are willing to contribute to this total. At that point those who want out, simply write down the same amount as they put in for their costs; that leaves only those whose amounts differ. Next session I announce the two totals. In the event of a negative difference, I pass round further slips for those who would like to close the gap, which can be anyone. At the end, I bring together those left in the process, so that those who offered more than it cost put the extra on the table, as it were, but outside the sessions, and those who needed more than they could pay take the difference off the table. It is thus entirely a matter of will and of those who have the will. No one is obliged to take part and there is no discussion in the sessions of any kind.

Economics and Accounting

The ground for a new beginning?



A steadily building international group of people is appearing who are committed to understanding how economics can be given a new ground through accounting, both from a theoretical standpoint as well as by finding three kinds of money in accounting. From Waldorf teachers enthusiastic to teach financial literacy to their students to entrepreneurs, economists and academics, there seems to be a growing sense that otherwise divergent worlds can meet when the objectivity of accounting provides the means and context. At a recent workshop at L'Aubier, Neuchatel, Switzerland, a work group debated the finer points of basic accounting as a universal language. Related to this is the idea of grounding associative economics directly on the methodology advocated by Rudolf Steiner, of thinking neither inductively nor deductively. A number of colleagues in formal academia are giving thought to how this challenge might be accomplished.



EC Funds

Defraying meeting costs / chb

Last year at the Montreal meeting I proposed that the costs of the Financial Literacy Day be assumed by the Economics Conference Research Fund, in that I felt what we would do (and, indeed, did do) would be of a concrete kind and capable of putting in the public domain. This year my thought is to include the Financial Literacy Day in the overall costs, although attendance is optional, but I wanted to identify the principle I was using. Namely, in line with the Research Fund's Protocols, that it is a right and proper thing to use the Research Fund (as distinct from the Publications and the Admin Funds) to lower the cost of attendance in research meetings where there is likely to be a concrete, publishable outcome – meaning something that the world of economics in general would be able to recognise as a contribution coming out of spiritual science or associative economics.



My name is Bond, Youth Bond.

I am a memorial to all who died young,
Who gave their lives, who lost them.

To all who have no work, no hope, no future,
I exist to make amends, to right the wrongs,
To give now what then was rent away.

To make that the coming day
Ensures for all the generations hence
What, denied, their forebears never knew
– a life lived full, initiatives unfolded.

But this above all else I pledge:
That those initiatives be fully funded.

Poem by CHB. Statue by Raoul Hunter, Quebec City, Canada. Photo by MD.