



Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

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

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Dear Colleagues,

If only the May 1st cry could have been (or could yet become) "*Spiritual Workers of the World Unite!*", then there would be a deeper significance to sending this newsletter at this time. Alas it comes as a delayed Easter greetings, heartfelt all the same!

With best wishes for the summer,

Christopher Houghton Budd

8th Annual Meeting, Michaelmas 2009

As described in the last newsletter, the annual meeting will take place at L'Aubier, near Neuchatel, Switzerland. We have, however, decided to change the subject to the question of what lies behind – or, better put, beyond – the global financial crisis. For more details please see the accompanying document. The gathering will be open to any member of the School.

Who's Doing What?

The following news was sent in in response to the recent request for information. Apologies for heavy editing where necessary! The items included are only a small part of what is going on around the world. Hopefully, more people will send in news for the next issue.

Viroqua, USA (from Kim Chotzen)

Two significant events took place recently in the Midwestern USA under the auspices of the Economics Conference. Kim Chotzen, convenor and member of the Economics Conference, hosted over 25 people for *Inner and Outer Associative Economics* with presenter Christopher Houghton Budd in October, 2008 in Viroqua, Wisconsin. The second event, *The Colors of Money Seminar*, took place 4 months later in nearby La Farge, Wisconsin, with Arthur Edwards as presenter.

The tone of *Inner and Outer Aspects of Associative Economics* was set by discussing Rudolf Steiner's Deed and the consequences of misunderstanding his life mission. At the end of his life, Rudolf Steiner embedded a modern view of reincarnation and karma in the social form of the refounded Anthroposophical Society. At the end of the conference, participants expressed interest in the *Colors of Money Seminar* (see <http://www.anthromedia.com/articles/economics/reports/>). A logical next step, it presents an in-depth, practical approach to working in accounting with three kinds of money. As the scheduled date drew near, the planned speaker, Christopher Houghton Budd, could not attend and family illness on the part of the convenor presented further challenges. Importantly, the event then took on a life of its own and was carried by virtue of the content itself and people's recognition of its validity. The opportunity was also made for Arthur Edwards to make his speaking debut in North America. Also significant was the fact that the event generated a healthy surplus as seed money for further research of Steiner's economic thought, demonstrating that in an associative economy, everyone, even the event, can profit.

Elsewhere

As well as the events mentioned by Kim Chotzen above, a successful *Colours of Money* seminar was also held in Stroud, England in early April, this time including a good number of people from 'outside' the anthroposophical movement. Meanwhile, in the Antipodes, Christopher Houghton Budd ran the *Inner and Outer Aspects of Associative Economics* workshops in Auckland, New Zealand (February) and then again in Melbourne, Australia (March). (This workshop will also be given in London on May 17th and June 21st.)

Interestingly, in all cases attendance was good and each event, being carefully monitored through detailed spreadsheets made a profit for the wider work of the Economics Conference. How wonderful if this way of working could become more general in the anthroposophical movement... not to mention increased and scaled up! However it is done, funding the section activity is surely a right response to the present conjuncture. The total raised so far is USED 1,874, NZD 1,035, and GBP 47 (!). The idea here is like the Goetheanum Fund in Switzerland – to use 50% locally and remit the balance to the work at the Goetheanum for the ongoing work of the Economics Conference. As we are looking to publish the

proceedings of the next meeting, maybe this would be good use of the funds. Or towards travel, though this feels less 'right' to me. Comments welcome.

Timisoara, Romania

Dan Botez sent in details of his work in Romania with the local Waldorf school, the Rudolf Steiner Foundation and his own business Albiviolet. "We would like to promote internationally the idea and concept of building a new Waldorf Campus in Timisoara, comprising of a kinder garden, high-school, boarding-school and an Institute for the Training of Waldorf Teachers." Romania is not an easy place to work economically, so the material evinced quite some courage, the more so if the aim is to work associatively.

Columbus, Ohio (from Meg Freeling)

In the movie, *Amazing Grace*, there's a wonderful line that goes something like, "Every spring the earth turns green, the birds return, the flowers bloom, and William Wilberforce re-introduces his bill in Parliament to abolish slavery." William Wilberforce (1759-1833) has epitomized persistence in the face of obstacles as he fought to outlaw the slave trade.

In Columbus, Ohio, we continue to strive toward an independent and accessible Waldorf school based on Rudolf Steiner's twin gifts of Waldorf pedagogy and associative economics. We are currently laying plans for a Waldorf grade school while simplifying the Waldorf preschool, Briar Rose Children's Center, to offer a half-day program that can sustain itself pedagogically and financially. In anticipation of applying for the Associative Economics Quality Guarantee Mark, our two organizations have been preparing separate accounts and practicing holding a quarterly financial review meeting.

William Wilberforce did finally get his bill passed. With his dogged persistence as our inspiration and our goad, we continue our striving to create a school here that can similarly abolish the inequities of access and the current educational practices that inadvertently block children from awakening their spirit and potential during their learning years.

Lafayette, USA (from Stephen Vallus)

I wrote a short piece on 'Land in an associative economy', which is to be published in the next issue of the Anthroposophical Society in America's Midwest Newsletter. I continue to research human beings' problematic economic relationship to land. As a foil to my professional life as a tax accountant, I am also in the process of transplanting 50 fig trees into a greenhouse which is to be constructed in the next few weeks. This is an urban micro-farm project which will determine the economic viability of growing fresh figs for the local market. The project has been self-financed thus far with the added benefit of rent free land on some friends' property on the under-developed side of town.

London, England

Arthur Edwards is convening a mainstream seminar in London this autumn that will celebrate the centenary of Hartley Withers' classic work 'The Meaning of Money'. Steiner referred several times to Withers, describing him as a discriminating observer whose book (published in German as 'Geld und Kapital') was "the best that had been written on [the] subject and [was] the outcome of real insight into social conditions." (*The Social Future*, Anthroposophic Press, 1945, pp. 2-3).

Response to the seminar has been positive, with *Financial Times* columnist and UK 'journalist of the year', Gillian Tett, declaring herself 'delighted' to take part. The proceedings are to be published as a monograph, prior to which, an essay will appear in the June edition of *Economic Affairs* showing the place in today's events of Steiner's monetary concepts. Hopefully, this and other 'discreet' discussions taking place with influential city figures marks the start of a gradual inclusion of Rudolf Steiner's thinking in public economic debates.

Madrid, Spain

For the Spanish speaking among us, *Editorial Rudolf Steiner* in Madrid has just published a book, *La Economía Moderna - El Yo y La Economía* (The I and Economic Life) based on a conference held in Barcelona in July 2007. Christopher Houghton Budd gave the lectures, which synthesised many ideas now familiar to many of us, and Joaquin Castro very capably translated. The edition was brought to completion by Christian Bosse.

Newsletter Reminder

Just a reminder that this simpler form of occasional letter now replaces *Associate* as our means of communication. *Associate!* (note the slight change of name) is now combined with the former *Associative Economics Monthly*. If you would like to subscribe, please do so via cfae.biz/associate.