



# Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

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

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## **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, 16 to 19 September 2010**

*At L'Aubier, Neuchatel, Switzerland*

This year's meeting will consider the mission of folk souls. The precise theme has yet to be finalised but will be linked to the centenary of the impulse behind the 1910 lecture cycle. Having looked last year at the implications of true pricing and association for many aspects of modern economic life, we would next like to consider the way in which the rights life today facilitates (or impedes) the way in which individuals and even peoples, alone or collectively, can take initiative and be directly responsible for economic life.

This will again be a research gathering with attendance limited to 20, so please be sure to book early!

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## **FINANCES**

### *Funding Concept*

The funding of the Economics Conference is linked to the question asked by Mr. Van Leer at the Christmas Conference in 1923, to the effect that one should find ways to fund the Goetheanum in the sense of the sectional activities undertaken throughout the world. The idea is to retain 50% of such funds in the country where raised, remitting the balance to the Economics Conference account (1319) at Dornach. This is intended to keep things simple and to replicate the Swiss Society's *FondsGoetheanum*, where the public is being asked to support the work of spiritual science, sending their funds via the Anthroposophical Society. The monies collected are then made available to the various sections or section-like activities.

### *2009*

In the course of 2009, in addition to the regular amounts provided by a private individual, a donation was received from the Canadian Society, and funds were raised from events held under the auspices of the Economics Conference, meaning events undertaken by Economics Conference participants. In this case, the monies are currently held in various locations, in order to minimise exchange rate costs on the relatively small amounts involved. The outcome is that initially small amounts are available for the costs of activities undertaken in the spirit of the 'invisible Goetheanum'. These should be used for work that can be said to be of a humanity-wide character, rather than national. As we would like to publish the proceedings of the last annual meeting, this would seem to be a suitable use. Perhaps others have other ideas. Please let me know.

### *National 'Trustees'*

As a way of incarnating the work of the Economics Conference further simple trustee arrangements have been created in various countries. In the USA, a small 'committee' of EC participants - Kim Chotzen (Viroqua), Meg Freeling (Columbus, Ohio), Susan Gravelle (East Troy) and Daniel Osmer (Sebastopol) - has been formed to suggest uses for funds raised in the US. It is hoped that funds raised in the US will be held by the *Anthroposophical Society in America*. In the UK, a similar arrangement exists in partnership with *Hermes Trust*, with the funds being supervised by Arthur Edwards and Christopher Houghton Budd. Similar steps are being taken in Hungary and Australia.

### *2010*

Going forwards, it would be wonderful if more fund raising of this kind could be undertaken, both contributions from individuals and organisations but also the generating of event surpluses.

## **SURPLUS VALUE**

The modern world turns on the various meanings given to 'surplus value'. For the most part there is a struggle between those who think it belongs to the providers of capital and those who regard it as the property of the workers. Of course, if one takes Rudolf Steiner's twin value theory as a reference, then the answer is that it belongs to both, or neither. Indeed, Steiner's idea is to 'lose' the surplus by way of 'gift money', essentially as income to 'spiritual workers'. In the case of the Economics Conference that would most easily be understood as research. An important thought for supporting the idea of surplus value in the sense of it belonging to humanity generally, is to reflect on how Steiner describes the reason for the Norsemen's invasions, how they flooded out of their areas because, as a consequence of their bravery and courage (Starkmut), their egos entered into their will life, resulting in a surfeit of forces. It is a powerful idea that whenever a human being takes hold of his will

it gives rise to a surplus that has to flow away from him. For what are today's capital markets if not the repositories of such money, unable to lose itself because the thoughts we use are not a match for the reality we face?

### **UK Activities**

In order to further the presence of associative economics in the UK, a number of activities are now being undertaken under the auspices of the Economics Conference.

#### *AE Days*

Six AE Days will be held at Rudolf Steiner House every other Friday from 23 April to 2 July. They will comprise three parts: Intensive studies for those taking the *AE Diploma* (see below), the *Colours of Money seminar*, an introduction to associative economics, and lecture-based conversations on the following themes: Beyond the Market – the Place of Associative Economics; The Right-on Corporation – the Future of For- and Not-for-profits; Deep Accounting – the Basis of a One-world Currency; Air Beneath Your Wings – Youth Financial Literacy; Freeing the Circling Stars – Prefunded Education; Of Wheat and Gold – the Economics of Farming.

#### *AE Diploma*

The *AE Diploma* is designed to be run at a masters level for those who wish to integrate Steiner's approach into their economic affairs, whether as business people, teachers or students. Though not externally accredited, the course is run by Christopher Houghton Budd, *PhD Banking and International Finance*, and Arthur Edwards, *MPhil Economics, Dipl. AE.*, both active in academia as representatives of Steiner's work. The Diploma's accreditation concept is not one of seeking special recognition, but of developing the intrinsic validity that enables individuals to get 'normal' qualifications while bringing associative economic ideas into the general debates of our times. The Diploma is modelled on the high standards used when examining and mentoring doctoral students in formal academic settings.

#### *Finance and Education*

A research cohort of people linked to the Waldorf movement is now focusing on the financing of education through the particular idea of independent youth colleges. Particular themes include the need for financial literacy in young people and the significance of English equity and trust law.

#### *Dunlop's Footsteps*

As regards activities in the UK, one wonders if one is walking in Daniel Dunlop's footsteps in such matters. If so, one is helped enormously by that other anthroposophist who devoted himself to Steiner's economic works, Owen Barfield. In 2010, it is hoped that the work of these two men will be further 'mined' for the treasures they contain. Barfield's insights into equity are of particular importance in this regard and are a focus of active research.

### **WHAT ARE EC PEOPLE UP TO?**

**Rembert Biemond** in Germany has inaugurated a website dedicated to the life and work of Juergen Smit – see [www.joergensmit.org](http://www.joergensmit.org).

**Kim Chotzen** has begun a Diploma in Associative Economics. Part of her study will be the financing concept behind the Economics Conference Fund.

**Arthur Edwards** recently completed his MPhil at Buckingham University (the only British university not funded by the state) with a thesis entitled 'Three Kinds of Money – Rudolf Steiner and the Development of Monetary Economics'. He also represents associative economics in the context of the Institute for Humane Studies, founded in the 1940s by Arthur 'Baldy' Harper and Spencer Heath and based at George Mason University, Washington DC.

**Christopher Houghton Budd** has completed a commission to write a book for professionals that looks at the future of finance from the point of view of an Englishman through the lens of Steiner's *Economics* course. Entitled 'Edge Funding', the book explores the interface between the real and financial economies.

**Joan Melé**, a participant from Barcelona who was president of the Society in Spain and is now active in Triodos Spain, has recently published a book: *Dinero y conciencia – A quién sirve mi dinero?* (Money and consciousness - who is my money serving?). Published by Plataforma Barcelona.

**Daniel Osmer** in California has begun a regular study in the newly opened 'Associative Economics Café' in Sebastopol, California. This is art of his activities to bring young people in touch with Steiner's work.

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Note: Such information as has been sent in is published here. Another medium for seeing or notifying what is going on is the *anthromedia* website: [www.anthromedia.com/articles/economics/reports/](http://www.anthromedia.com/articles/economics/reports/).