

Economics Conference Summer School / Threefold Foundation, Spring Valley
A participant's account / Kim Chotzen, Viroqua, WI.

This summer, from July 26 to August 1, 22 people from Canada, Mexico, the UK, Brazil and the US participated in a Summer School under the auspices of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum on the Threefold Foundation campus in Spring Valley, NY. In key respects, the event followed on from the annual gathering of the ASA in Portland in 2024, titled *Step Into a Modern Esoteric Stream*. The Summer School ran on several levels and included one of the main presenters (who was also the keynote speaker in Portland), Marc Desaulles, General Secretary and Treasurer of the Swiss Anthroposophical Society, addressing themes ranging from Rosicrucianism in our times to the responsibility of the West with respect to the birth of the Consciousness Soul. Unfortunately, at the last moment Marc was unable to attend in person. He did however make two significant online contributions to the Summer School's central topics of spiritual geography and the hierarchical beings connected to this part of the world.

As he had described in Portland, Marc again told the story of how the Anthroposophical Society provides a vessel for anthroposophy to orient human affairs. After WW1, when Central Europe was crushed and its folk soul stepped back, responsibility for the mission of that folk soul passed to the West. This and related events serve as an example and context for understanding how great the risk is for attacks on human freedom now that the gods have 'set us free.' For this reason, as a protection Rudolf Steiner linked Michael with the re-founded Anthroposophical Society and embedded in it a Rosicrucian potential that requires complete truthfulness and responsibility 'until the end of time.'¹

During the proceedings, Robert Karp had been invited to provide a backdrop to this situation, which he did in terms of the esoteric or occult geography of the West and historical contexts concerning the interactions of hierarchical beings – specifically Uriel, Michael and Oraphiel. He pointed especially to Uriel's influence needing the aid of Michael lest it be 'captured' by evil tendencies.

We considered the being Skythianos in the long history of the birth of the Consciousness Soul in the West. Are those who journeyed to this part of the world from other lands, or who have incarnated here since ages past the rightful bearers of the Consciousness Soul? Or is it a matter of those who now incarnate here creating a human society that goes beyond blood? Is this the true meaning of America's Christian heritage, and can the constitutional and financial history of this country be seen in that light? Charles Burkam gave a fine report on the evolution of US governance, complete with its indigenous influences, while Daniel Osmer presented many interesting stories and historical details concerning the role played by double-entry bookkeeping, financial literacy and entrepreneurship in the early years of the republic by people such as Franklin, Washington, Hamilton and others.

This led to an examination of double-entry bookkeeping as an experience one can have that is similar to that of the neophyte in the Mysteries of Hibernia – a threshold experience of being between two poles that can awaken an awareness of a third revelatory, even Divine, element. Approached in this way, with its use of double-entry bookkeeping, modern accounting can be seen as a powerful tool for overcoming the polarization and economic materialism of our times.

¹ An allusion to the Christ's response to Ahriman's Third Temptation claim that life on earth was his realm. 'Then I will stay here until it is has been christened.'

If against all this background, the Anthroposophical Society can be understood as a vehicle meant to be an example to humanity of how to work in social life such that human freedom and responsibility are protected; a home for Anthroposophia where angels work with individual human beings in Groups and Branches, archangels work on the level of Country Societies, and archai on the level of the General Anthroposophical Society². If, further, we understand double-entry bookkeeping as a means by which one can stand between two poles without losing one's freedom and sense of responsibility – on the contrary; and if we take seriously Rudolf Steiner's words that since the Renaissance, 'economic man', *homo economicus*, has taken on the governing role of humanity³, then surely as a spiritual movement, we are called upon to take note of double-entry bookkeeping as the language, or at least grammar, of that consciousness.

The Summer School was hosted by the Economics Group of the Anthroposophical Society⁴, which fosters the research work of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum, much of which since its inception after the 2001 Kimberton conference has been focused on understanding how the financial indications of Rudolf Steiner during the Christmas Conference quietly pave the way for financing spiritual initiatives in ways that prevent them becoming snagged on materialism. An important aspect of this, the point at which the Summer School came to an end, concerned how Steiner's hoped-for unified Society might find an echo at the level branches and groups.

To that end, a follow-up workshop has been organized – *Bookkeeping with God*⁵ – for treasurers and bookkeepers in the Society in the US. Intended as a hands-on experience based on the practice of bookkeeping, it is open to anyone who carries such responsibility or wants to know more about how the work of the Circle of Treasurers can strengthen the Society's finances at that level. A flier can be found [here](#).⁶

This short report does not begin to do justice to the scope of the Summer School but merely aims to bring attention to it for any readers interested to know more. A lengthy and comprehensive report of the planning and proceedings of the event can be found [here](#).⁷

² This image is from Marc Desaulles.

³ *The Incarnation of Ahriman*, Lecture 2, Zurich, 27 October 1919.

⁴ Since 2017, a recognized subject matter group based within the Anthroposophical Society in America.

⁵ This title hearkens back to the 'father' of double-entry bookkeeping, Luca Pacioli, a colleague of Leonardo da Vinci and a friar who used the method as a way to comprehend emancipated capital and the social and moral challenges this brings. Before recording their accounts, the bookkeepers of the time, typically people who had taken Holy Orders, would write something like 'I stand before God' at the top of their ledgers. (29 August 1922, Oxford, England.)

⁶ https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Towards_2023/4th_Treasurers_Research_Meeting.pdf

⁷ https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Towards_2023/ECG_Towards_2033_5_Summer_School_Full_Report.pdf