



Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

Towards 2033 / 4

Special Summer School edition / Whitsun 2026

Internal document sent to all Economics Conference colleagues. Please, do not circulate it, therefore.

Welcome to this special Whitsun edition of *Towards 2033*, which has been produced as a primer – a combination of briefing and taster – for the Summer School taking place in Spring Valley, New York at the end of July this year (see next page). It is something of a hybrid in that it is organised in four main sections, whose themes are in fact intertwined.

We focus first on the Summer School, with its long sweep of history, culminating in questions concerning the Anthroposophical Society in America (ASA). A glance at the proposed sequence of topics for the Summer School intimates the connection, which is elaborated below.

But a second strand of this edition concerns an unexpected return to a lecture adjacent to our Annual Meeting in Montreal in May 2014. Given by Marc Desaulles – General Secretary and Treasurer of the Anthroposophical Society in Switzerland. Kim Chotzen found herself rereading her notes as backgrounding for an Easter talk at the Viroqua Branch of the ASA, where she is the treasurer.

Coming out of left field one might think, but not so when one considers its contents, which we would like to draw attention to here (p.6), albeit only in outline as introduced by Kim and responded to by me (as administrator and convenor of the Economics Conference respectively).

Spoken close to Whitsun, what Marc shared speaks across the 12 years since with a pertinence for today that feels god-meant. Conveying the good news of the *Fifth Gospel*, a main theme he touched on that concerns us most here is the *witnessing of the Apostles* – not now of the events of Golgotha but of their echo in the story of the Anthroposophical Society itself.

Another unplanned event was the realisation that an important aspect of Marc's lecture – considered here under the title *Gold and the Third Temptation* – was the deep significance of first basing money on gold and then, in our time, letting it go. Though likely unknown to him, the way Marc treats this subject links directly to Ralph Courtney's idea of a 'goldless economy'. (p.7) But it also goes to the heart of events today and is central to the turmoil that belongs to humanity's 'second chance' story.

With Ralph Courtney we are linked not only to St Gallen but to the fate of associative

economics in the USA and the very founding of the place where we are meeting for the Summer School: Threefold Foundation and Threefold Branch in Spring Valley.

As if all that was not enough, through our work with the Society's finances we have also found ourselves engaged in the current revisiting of the story of the Anthroposophical Society, in this what one might see as a pause year. So it makes sense to link to this directly, as the Summer School concerns that also.

Just as the Social Sciences Section has sponsored the current review – see especially its Continuity Report¹ – so, in its role as would-be Economics Section where financial research would have its home, the Economics Conference can throw light on the Anthroposophical Society from the twin perspective that is already part of its remit. First, the financial aspects that we have already been addressing in the three Treasurers Research Meetings held in the US so far. Second, the idea that the Anthroposophical Society in America has a particular challenge in meeting Rudolf Steiner's expectations of the West – expectations already voiced at the laying of the first Foundation Stone on 20 September 1913.

The material has been assembled in a way that complements what has been previously published in *Towards 2033* and is organised in a sequence that helps tell this complex story and also informs the background material on p.2.

We have produced this edition mindful that members of the Anthroposophical Society wholly new to the work of the Economics Conference may be meeting it for the first time.

Welcome to our world!

Christopher Houghton Budd / Convenor
Kim Chotzen / Administrator

To resolve our past requires knowledge.
To forge our future we need courage.
To experience the present we must develop dedication.
Our thinking needs riddles to wake up.
Our feeling needs pain to mature.
Our willing needs resistance to become strong.

– Rudolf Steiner

¹ <https://konstitution.anthroposophie.online/Konstitution.pdf>
[The image top right is by William Blake.]



SUMMER SCHOOL

As one can see from its sequence of topics, the Summer School reruns humanity's long and intensive journey through history – almost from the beginning to the end of time – to allude again to the *Fifth Gospel*. It may well prove both a test and a testing of will. The will to enact it and the

will to contribute and listen to its message. The kind of will that is born of immediate and continuing renewal of vows, rather than duty or reliance on the momentum of striving. As Marie Steiner once intimated to her hapless young eurythmists, the kind of will that results from realising that those who undertake initiatives should not expect vacations!

Scythianos to...

Scythianos: 'author' of Hibernian Mysteries / Hibernia and Accounting / St Gallen, Columbanus, and the forgetting of the West / Europe:America

Columbus to...

Discovering Columbia|America and the interface with Prior Peoples / Uriel and spiritual geography / Preparing for the I and the Consciousness Soul / Readying the US for Rosicrucianism

Celebrating 1776

The founding of the USA / Americans' Constitutional Disposition / A glimpse into the story of bookkeeping in the US / Taxation and non-profit considerations in the US

1923 to 2026

The coming of the 'Verse for America' as translated in the case of Threefold / Associative economics in the US via key players: Dunlop, Courtney, Behrens, etc. / 'Seed Corn' economics: The Austrian School and The Other Austrian / Economics Group and the work of the Economics Conference in US

ASA to 2033

The founding of the ASA / 1933 Bylaws / Revisiting the ASA through the lens of finance and branches ASA dual economy: Members' Fees and Research Donations / The role of groups/branches (instead of regions)

Culmination

Creation of an ASA Circle of Treasurers? / The next seven years

Background Material

For those new to the work of the Economics Conference (economics.goetheanum.org), much of what is driving the Summer School is ongoing research into the relationship between Europe and America. We first began to look at this in a gathering in Switzerland in January 2024, which was followed by Marc Desaulles being invited to speak at the ASA's Portland AGM in October 2024. Other meetings have taken place in this connection, especially linked to the financing and governance of the Anthroposophical Society in general. Alongside, we have documented our work in our in-house journal, *Towards 2033*, of which this is a special edition.

In the previous two editions (see below) we began to focus all this in on a Summer School, originally intended for Penmaenmahr, on the edge of Hibernia, but then transferred to the western hemisphere. Some key themes are noted below.

Towards 2033 / 2²

The story of the Economics Section
The functions of a General Secretary
America and Europe

Towards 2033 / 3³

Step into Another World
Goethe and the USA
Goetheanum Fund *Worldwide*

In the background have been many lectures by Rudolf Steiner and other material, some of which are also detailed below.

Rudolf Steiner

The Tension between East and West. CW 83.
The Mission of the Folk-Souls, esp. lect. 2. CW 121.
The Karma of Materialism. GA 176.
The Christmas Conference. GA 260.
The Fifth Gospel. GA 148.
History of Bau Verein. GA 252, pt 31.
Geographic Medicine. GA 198 .

Other

The Treasurers Research Meetings⁴
*Step into Another World*⁵
Guarding the Shores⁶
1998 Hibernia and Accounting (in Guarding the Shores)

Websites

<https://economics.goetheanum.org/research/towards-2033>
<https://www.hopespringseternal.world/about/>

²

https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Towards_2023/ECG_Towards_2033___2.pdf

³

https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Towards_2023/ECG_Towards_2033___3.pdf

⁴

<https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Va>

[rious_pdfs/EGA_Spring_Valley_Seminar_October_7_8__2025.pdf](https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Various_pdfs/EGA_Spring_Valley_Seminar_October_7_8__2025.pdf)

⁵

https://aebookstore.com/?s=Step+Into+Another+World&post_type=page

⁶ <https://www.lulu.com/shop/christopher-houghton-budd/guarding-the-shores/paperback/product-9dggjg.html?srltid=AfmBOoqrHgZbA3Y4iUtLQ6w29vdDowX4kwKo7aco4IJhLYIATdGPvtPK&page=1&pageSize=4>

Estimated Costs

We estimate the per-person conference cost – not including travel – to be between 800 and 1,200 USD, made up of:

- 100 USD conference registration fee (to be sent immediately, please, to: **Anthroposophical Society in America, specifying a donation of 100 USD with a Donor Comment stating: 'EC Fund / Summer School' (then telling us you have done so via economics@goetheanum.ch**)
- About 385 USD (shared) to 525 USD (solo) in lodging per person
- 300-500 USD in meals for the week (depending on whether using the cafe or self-catering)

Travel Equalization Fund

To assist others with their travel costs or to receive a rebate for your own, Stephen Vallus is offering to organize a travel equalization fund. If you would like to know more please email him: SVallush66@gmail.com.

Meals can be self-catered in the communal kitchen available in Holder House or taken in the Threefold Cafe. There is a great wholefood grocery store located 10-minutes away: a lovely walk through the woods. This allows for a full range of options from eating alone to all together, but without undertaking catering ourselves.

Lodging Reservation

Lodging will be on-site, where we have reserved 35 single person beds in a combination of rooms with single, double occupancy and triple occupancy. There are also nearby homestays. We encourage you to make your reservation ASAP at <https://threefold.org/visit-us/accommodations/>. It will require this code ECG2026. When reserving a double room, please indicate the name of the person with whom you are sharing if you have a preference. You will be charged 50% of the cost at the time of booking your reservation, to be paid in full upon arrival. Rates are listed on the website: approximately \$71.00 for single occupancy; \$52.00 pp for double occupancy; \$159.00 for 'Family Rooms' with 1-3 guests. **Rooms are being held in reserve until June 30**, when we will release any unspoken for, so please book as soon as you can. Sunday, July 26 (arrival and check-in after 4 pm) until Saturday August 1 (departure and checkout before 10 am).

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM

| Sunday 26 July | Monday 27 July | Tuesday 28 July | Wednesday 29 July | Thursday 30 July | Friday 31 July | Saturday 1 August |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| | Scythianos to... | Columbus to... | 1776 Celebration | 1923 to 2026 | ASA to 2033 | Culmination |
| Night-time reflections | | | | | | |
| | Scythianos: 'author' of Hibernian Mysteries | Discovering Columbia America and the interface with Prior Peoples | The founding of the USA | The coming of the Verse for America as translated in the case of Threefold | The founding of the ASA / 1933 Bylaws | Creation of ASA Circle of Treasurers? |
| Pause | | | | | | |
| | Hibernia and Accounting | Uriel and spiritual geography below the 49th parallel | Americans' Constitutional Disposition | Associative economics in the US via key players: Dunlop, Courtney, Behrens, etc. | Revisiting the structure of ASA through the lens of finance and branches | The next seven years |
| Lunch | | | | | | |
| | St Gallen, Columbanus, and the forgetting of the West | Preparing for the I and the Consciousness Soul | A glimpse into the story of bookkeeping in the US | Seed Corn' economics: The Austrian School and The Other Austrian | ASA dual economy: Members' Fees and Research Donations | |
| Pause | | | | | | |
| Meet 'n Greet | Europe:America | Readying the US for Rosicrucianism | Taxation and non-profit considerations in the US | Economics Group and the work of the Economics Conference in US | The role of groups/branches (instead of regions) | |
| Supper | | | | | | |
| Overview then sleep | The day's themes reflected through dramatic improvisation (Open to local branch members) | | | | | |



From St Gallen to Spring Valley – a reminder

Based on a conversation with Marc Desaulles, 19 September 2010⁷
Kim Chotzen / Viroqua, USA

In 1923, a young man by the name of Rheinhard Mueller, age 17 or 18, was going to the US to start a branch of his father's business. His father had a cloth business in St. Gallen in Switzerland and was sending him to New York to either sell or manufacture cloth.

Ralph Courtney was an American journalist for the *New York Herald Tribune*, who had met Steiner personally in 1919. When he heard that Mueller was to come to the US, he contacted him and told him to go to Steiner to get a verse for working in the US. Mueller went to Steiner who wrote out on the spot the 'verse for America' as a way to indicate what was needed to collaborate with the spiritual beings there.

Courtney was a friend of Charlotte Parker, heir to the Parker pen fortune, with whom and others he founded the Threefold Group at Spring Valley on Parker's vacation land. The verse was not meant to be used as a 'threefold' verse but got linked with that work.

The town of St. Gallen is named for Gallou, one of the Hibernian monks who accompanied Colombane to visit the Pope to tell him that the Europeans must forget about what we now call America. They must not know about the existence of America in order that the birth of the Consciousness Soul, with its requisite encounter with materialism, not be derailed through the powerful forces under the earth there because of the north-south mountains.⁸

Colombane received authority from the Pope to erase the names of this continent and all traces of it so that within three generations, no one remembered it was there. He said the European souls were too vulnerable to the forces of materialism coming from the West.

Hibernia (Ireland) was the opposite of America in the sense that it had no forces coming from underneath the earth and so people were very protected there, and because of their purity able to perceive the problem posed by the strong underground forces in America. The West was therefore closed to the consciousness of humanity in 500-600 AD.

When Columbus, who came from Genoa, went to Spain and from there took his ships to America the

west was 'discovered' – but actually re-discovered. Sometime later, Amerigo Vespucci also travelled there, and because he kept a journal that recorded the experiences of his voyage, he was controversially accorded with the discovery and therefore in 1507 the country was named after him.⁹

The Verse for America

md

May our feeling reach
Into the centre of our heart,
And seek to unite in love
With human beings seeking the same
goal.
With those spirits who, full of grace,
Strengthening us from regions of light,
And illuminating our love,
Look down on our earnest, heartfelt
striving.

– Rudolf Steiner

Anchored Expectations

Marcelo Delajara / Mexico City

The forthcoming Summer School of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum at Spring Valley is haunting me! I learnt recently that I am Spanish-Austrian, and not at all Anglo-Saxon, and thus that it might be a loss of time and money to delve into the spiritual undercurrents of US economics and the place of the USA in the evolution of anthroposophy and even mankind – the main topic of this Summer School.

I was in this confusing state of mind when, recently, in a class on inflation stabilization policy, I found myself telling my students that if central bankers want to exert any influence on the real economy by changing the interest rate, then they have to pray to the saints that the public will not change their inflation expectations any time soon.

Then I asked, rhetorically and at first jokingly: "Who is the saint of the economists to whom central bankers should direct their prayers?" The students laughed, but I felt something coming to me very strongly, and I then said in front of the class that I proposed Thomas Aquinas as the patron saint of economists.

I left it there, and at the end of the class my best student in this course on macroeconomics came to me and asked why I had chosen Thomas Aquinas. I started mumbling something about true prices and fair wages, when I decided instead to ask him why he was interested.

He said he had read quite a lot about Thomas Aquinas. I asked what had stayed with him after the reading, and he said that it was Aquinas's teaching that faith in Christ could, or should, be sustained by

⁷ Previously reported in *Towards 2024*, Part 4, p.20.

⁸ A different story, for example, to the challenges of Mexico.

⁹ Canada, by contrast, takes its name from the Iroquoian word for 'village'. Mexico derives from local peoples and their culture.

reason. I told him that this was certainly the most important thing, because it opened the possibility of becoming increasingly individualized and conscious oneself, and still love one another, which is a key aspect of modern economics.

After the class, while walking back to my office, I saw my student sitting on a bench in the patio of the school, deeply in thought, probably with something fundamental for his future as an economist already boiling inside him. At that moment, I saw what had emerged quite clearly: anchored inflation expectations, and thus credibility in central bank policy, by modern rational (i.e. fully informed) individuals is simply faith sustained by reason.

That was what came to me when I nominated Thomas Aquinas as the patron saint of economists, but it took a conversation with my best student to actually turn that intuition into something meaningful – an experience that restored my enthusiasm for attending the Summer School. In the end, I might actually be learning something.

CHB:

Marcelo works for the Anker Institute, which focuses on living wages.¹⁰ He made a presentation on this in Vancouver. But I suspect he has not noticed the irony of his title. More seriously, yes, the focus of the Summer School is on the US but with a particular purpose. When we speak of the relationship between Europe and America, what or where is the America we have in mind? Likewise, when we talk of 'North America' (e.g. a Section in North America), where and what are we referring to?

In my understanding, it is an allusion to a being that can hover over that area of the world, especially between what we today call Canada and Mexico. But it is not a place. Quite apart from the affront 'America' can be to many people in the Western hemisphere who live either above or below the USA, it is all too easy to lapse into a history and especially an economy in which the USA is seen (from within and without) as master not only of the whole northern part of the western hemisphere, but also all points south (to wit Pax Americana, the Monroe Doctrine and so on.)

But who or what inhabits this thought? This is why, in my mind, within the anthroposophical movement, we need to give clear autonomous status to the US, Mexico and Canada. Also, for me, it is important that Economics Conference colleagues from below and above the US take part in the Summer School. Especially Canada because of its branch structure; especially, Mexico because of its would-be Country Society plans.

One of Thomas Aquinas's Prayers

O ineffable Creator, Who, out of the treasure of Thy wisdom, hast ordained three hierarchies of Angels, and placed them in wonderful order high above the heavens, and hast most wisely distributed the diverse parts of the universe in such marvellous array...

Thou, Who art called the True Fountain of Light and supereminent Principle of Wisdom, vouchsafe to cast the beam of Thy brightness upon the darkness of my understanding, removing from me the double darkness of sin and ignorance in which I was born...

Thou, Who makest eloquent the tongues of little children, fashion my words and pour on my lips the grace of Thy blessing. Give me quickness of understanding, capacity of retaining, method and facility in learning, subtlety of interpreting, and abundant grace of expression...

Order the beginning, direct the progress and perfect the achievement of my work, Thou who art true God and true Man and livest and reignest for ever and ever.

Amen.

And when we have differentiated, then we have to bestow life again to that which we have separated and take pleasure in its continued life. Thus, when the painter or the poet... inspects the heavens early in the morning, late at night, he lets their character emerge; yet, given to him by ethereal spheres is that which conciliates, which is gentle and evolves, that he grasp it, feel it, form it.

– Goethe

¹⁰ <https://www.ankerresearchinstitute.org/>

FIFTH GOSPEL

The Opening of a Window

kc

My purpose in writing this short piece is to draw attention to an address Marc Desaulles gave twelve years ago¹¹ in Montreal in French concerning *The Fifth Gospel and the Third Temptation of Christ*. Alongside a unique and intimate account of Rudolf Steiner's esoteric research into the life of Jesus of Nazareth and the disciples around him 2,000 years ago, and of the historical significance within the anthroposophical movement of Steiner's revelations concerning this subject, Marc linked these themes to the 1922 Economics (*World as One Economy*) Course.

In a powerful subtext, he opened a window to a modern understanding of money as realized spirit and the veil of karma. Indeed, it becomes clear as one listens to these insights, that thanks to the Christ's Deed every human being has the freedom, responsibility and real possibility to transform economic life. Because of His linking Himself eternally to the earth in order to free human beings from having to 'turn stones into bread', i.e. work for metal (meaning gold and coins) in order to meet life's necessities.

An amazing circumstance arises out of this. Steiner is clear: in the Economics Course money *emerges* in economic life as realized spirit, the spirit of human beings collectively working together. We see each other and our karma through the veil of money!

Marc explains this in a further articulation in the context of the Fourteenth Class Lesson: 'as long as' money is linked to the human spirit, it is freed from the Ahrimanic Temptation of turning stones into bread. But that is up to us; each one of us. When we trust to the spirit in the other (personal credit) and not to material things such as real estate (real credit), we work to overcome the Third Temptation of Ahriman on his own – something that even the Christ could not do.

Rudolf Steiner's call to the West

chb

The lecture Kim has brought to our attention addresses key considerations at the heart of both the anthroposophical movement and the Society itself – that sacred conduit between the gods and the human family. Marc reminds us of the revelations of the *Fifth Gospel*¹² during the laying of the foundation stone of the first Goetheanum, where Rudolf Steiner speaks of 'the soul of the human being whom we



wish to consecrate, insofar as this is in our power.' 'Let us try to awaken in us at this moment the thought of the connection of the human soul with the striving in the turn of time.' He calls on us to 'write into [our] souls the greatness of the moment we are going through this evening,' and to realise in all humility 'that in our striving we must be the continuers of that spiritual work that was triggered in the Occident in the course of a progressive human development, but which, through the necessary counter-current of the Ahrimanic forces, must ultimately lead to humanity standing at a point where souls would wither and become desolate if the yearning for the spirit were not heard.'

Faced with Ahriman's deepening involvement in human affairs, we need to be mindful of how 'from the East it came – the Light and the Word of the Proclamation. It then went to the West ... waiting for the mirror to come from the West, which would add knowledge to what is still proclamation in the four-fold spoken word of the world.' 'If we show understanding for the present moment, then we will also understand that a fifth gospel can be added to the four. So, let the words that express the secrets of the macrocosm resound ... in addition to the secrets of the microcosm. The first utterance of the fifth gospel to be heard here is the ancient macrocosmic world prayer.' '[We,] the souls that will work in the flowering and fruiting of future earth evolution will have to understand what we want to incorporate into our souls for the first time today: the macro-cosmically resounding voice of the ancient eternal prayer.'

AUM,
Amen!
The evils prevail,
Witnesses of dissolving egoity,
The guilt of selfhood incurred by others,
Experienced in the daily bread,
In which heaven's will does not prevail,
Since man has separated himself from your kingdom
And forgot your name,
You fathers in the heavens.

But where is the West Steiner refers to when through his rebuff of leading Theosophists he shuts the door on the East? Is it Central Europe or Europe in its relation to America (with Britain and Hibernia in between)? Is it in the entire area and time where the Consciousness Soul has its current initial span of existence? Beginning with the ending of the edict against America-to-be, reaching all the way to today's challenge moment, where the symptom to watch carefully is the displacement of gold (and money collateralised to land) by a money and corresponding economic life based on celebrating the human spirit. In effect, the third stage in the fundamental sociological law.¹³

Is this what 'the mirror to come from the West' looks like today?

equally certain that precisely now we stand in need of such thoughts. – Kim and Christopher.

¹² *The Fifth Gospel*. GA 148.

¹³ *Freedom and Society*, Rudolf Steiner, 1898. (CW 31). Translated by Carlotta Hollman Dyson.

¹¹ We are aware that this lecture is not currently available. We are certain, however, of the fidelity of our interpretations and that in effect what we jointly shared on Marc's behalf, as it were, is a kind of abstract. We are

Gold and the Third Temptation

Building Bridges

Christopher Houghton Budd / Folkestone, GB

The talk referred to on p.6 culminates in an important discourse on the purpose of money and the long journey its form has taken from being anchored in gold, in the past-looking direction, to becoming attached to the 'sky hook' of human achievement as we walk to face our futures. Futures that do not so much come towards us from outside but appear in front of our feet out of our own will life. The freer this will is – free to serve, that is, not to self-obsess – the less will gold attract our attention.

Marc's paper will hopefully see the light of day in due course, but we draw attention to it for another reason: the illustration it provides of the often enduring nature of Marc's insights regarding both money and the Anthroposophical Society. This was born out once again in a recent online discussion organised by Kim Chotzen and hosted by the Economics Group of the ASA (see p.11) concerning the origins, history and future of the Society, for which I provided an independent reportage.¹⁴ Just as by way of a response to what he experienced in it, in his Montreal talk Marc linked the *Fifth Gospel* to modern-day finance, so my own comments concluded with a response true to our karma. Namely, I have long had the sense that what he says is as a voice speaking out of that special corner in Switzerland from within the second Goetheanum and out of the Red Window at its western end. My task is to translate and transpose that into 'the West', meaning in this case wherever the Anglo-Saxons have been a main influence. And to ask there: If what comes from the Goetheanum is true, what is required of the West?

In a picture, I have often spoken in terms of building bridges (which by definition are two-way) from the Goetheanum to the City of London, from the home of spiritual science to the seat of economic materialism, and from Rudolf Steiner's insights to the macro-financial thinking of today. Rightly or wrongly, this theme has guided much of my life – as is also evident in this edition of *Towards*. I mention it unashamedly at this juncture because I think it karmically necessary to do so. But also because in my own external life – and by way of an example of it – I am currently working on whether through the lens of what I call 'Goethean finance' one can see in the founding of the Bank of England, and therefore as an undeveloped part of its DNA, the very possibility of moving the cover of money from gold to human creativity.

¹⁴ *Prospects for Iteration*.

<https://economics.goetheanum.org/research/towards-2033#c47746>

¹⁵ Dick Whittington was a very wealthy merchant, who gave much money away. His foundation for helping women still exist 600 years later.

And so, unknown to her, Kim's drawing attention to the theme of gold and the Third Temptation has assisted me directly in my discreet mainstream conversations with colleagues linked to the Bank.

Future Returns¹⁵

Turn once again Dick Whittington
Avert your gaze from London town
Leave now behind liquidity
And find afresh prosperity
Let gold get mossed in London's vaults
And show it's there, but as default
In case we from our future stray
For then we can refind the way
But gold does not the future hold
In times to come we'll say, 'What's gold?'
For then what counts, what we'll esteem
Is whether we fulfil our dreams
And whether we deeds undertake
That leave but kindness in their wake
For then we'll all look back askance
At markets, gambling, life as chance
For then we'll know what some yet see
– there's wisdom in economy.

– chb

Ralph Courtney Forerunner of 'Goldless Economics' chb

Ralph Courtney is an important figure in the Summer School's story. He led the work of the Threefold Commonwealth Group of the Anthroposophical Society in America, of which Threefold Farm in Spring Valley, just outside New York, was and still is a centre. He was well known as an advocate of Rudolf Steiner's ideas about a threefold society.

Born in Nebraska,¹⁶ Courtney was taken early to Britain by his parents. He attended St. Paul's School in London and graduated from Brasenose College, Oxford.

Before World War I, he had been European correspondent for Associated Press. During the war and later, he headed the Paris bureau of *The New York Tribune*, forerunner of *The New York Herald Tribune*.¹⁷ In 1919, he covered the Versailles conference and in that capacity he also met Steiner in Dornach.¹⁸

In September 1944, 'The Forerunner' reprinted an article by Courtney, called *World Economy without World Government*. While it referred to world economy, it made no direct mention of world government. Reading through its argument, a better title would have been 'Economics in a Goldless World', because he was writing at the same time as the Bretton Woods conference, a major premise of which had originally been Keynes's International Clearing Union.

¹⁶ Dorothy country! And Warren Buffet!

¹⁷ It was in this capacity that he facilitated the arrival in the US of 'The Verse for America'.

¹⁸ Did he also meet Keynes in Paris?

Courtney makes the case for world trade to be cleared only by the exchange of goods, not gold or fiat money, and not by lending the buyers of goods the money to pay for them. In this view, in a goldless economy goods sold must be balanced by goods bought and this has to be a matter between traders and their 'National Business Boards', not between governments, whose role is restricted to supporting such arrangements, not financing them or being party to them. Boards because they have the overview of an economy and so do not represent any one segment or sector of it.

This echoes modern central bank parlance, where central banks – more objectively, centralised monetary authorities – are said to have 'more in common with the judiciary, than with politicians or commercial bankers; and [are] perceived as both technically expert, above the fray of self-seeking, and a necessary agent (of democracy) for imposing order on a potentially unruly financial system.'¹⁹

Courtney is clearly hinting at associations, but why, one wonders, does he speak of an International Clearing House for Trade Balances, a title so close to Keynes's project? Is it because he sees the clearing as a matter between traders in their different countries, not governments, which was the image of Keynes?

In his view, such arrangements would have allowed the US to take its 'rightful place in a general world economy.' Something, however, that would only be possible, per Courtney, 'in a fair and equitable world economy [where] the relationships among all [its] fluctuating factors must be realistic and free from subjective and political opinion.' A possibility that – today's President take note? – would have required the US to overcome its disdain for multi-lateral agreements.

What has happened to Ralph Courtney's work? How extensive was it? I ask because I think it would be important to follow up our book on Bernard Behrens²⁰ with an anthology of Courtney's writings.

Postscript

In fact, Patrick O'Meara and Gordon Edwards kindly did some leg work on this, pointing to the [Rudolf Steiner Library](#) catalogue in Hudson NY where one finds the following:

- What's wrong with the world?
- Christianity and the social order
- Threefold decentralism: the answer to onefold socialism
- Threefold republic
- World economy without world government
- How to de-total-ize the axis for peace

¹⁹ The image is from Capie, Goodhart and Schnadt, *The Future of Central Banking*. Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.91.

²⁰ [A Legacy Restated](#).

What if?

The Goetheanum Fund Worldwide, Money as Bookkeeping, and the IMF! *chb*

Interestingly, Courtney's detailed description of how the clearing would work is very close to the international use of money as bookkeeping (a close if not precise match to the work of the *Goetheanum Fund Worldwide*²¹ – see *Towards 2033 / 3*).

The Goetheanum Fund was established as a way for Country Societies of the Anthroposophical Society to work together financially, especially by way of shared accounting. For many years in Switzerland it has also published a magazine 'show-casing' spiritual scientific research as it impacts the practical challenges of our times, as a means to raise money for that work at the Goetheanum itself and wherever the Goetheanum is active in a country. Recently, it was widened to provide an instrument for giving feet to the work of the Circle of Treasurers.

Embryonic though it is, the working of the Fund (or the Economics Conference Fund, for that matter) is an example of several autonomous entities in different countries coordinating their finances as one shared economy by (a) treating money as bookkeeping, supported by (b) their liquidity. Not simply sharing one another's liquidity but recognising that overall the liquidity of the 37+ Country Societies is one pool in several parts – the liquidity in fact of the Anthroposophical Society as a whole when seen from the moon (or the space station). So that, in simple terms, a bill incurred in one part of its economy is settled in another part.

Were those entities the different parts of a worldwide corporation, this would not be seen as rocket science. And in technical terms, such a way of working is precisely what the IMF needs today if it is to move from its capture by governments and geopolitics to become a genuinely multi-lateral organisation regardless of the size of its members' economies. In that sense, it could become an example of Courtney's 'goldless economics'. A replacement, no less, to the, now given up, Bretton Woods arrangements.

Fantastical as that thought may be, I mention it for three reasons. Firstly, as a way to get the measure of Courtney as an economist. Secondly, to assess the place of associative economics in the US and the world today. Thirdly, because of my growing conviction that only by grounding social existence on clear, associative finance will the world avoid coming off its spiritual hinges. A problem as real within the Anthroposophical Society, as outside it. Indeed, when one looks at such a possibility from outside the anthroposophical movement it can seem that the Anthroposophical Society is behind the curve. Technically maybe, but in the timing of karma possibly not.

²¹

<https://www.anthroposophie.ch/en/society/publications/goetheanum-fund.html>



Bookkeeping and America

Daniel Osmer /
Sebastopol, USA

Double-entry bookkeeping (DEB) is a simple yet powerful technique that has emerged over time as a reflection of human activity and exchange.

The original double-entry technique was based on the fact of two qualities of accounts in any transaction where the formula (on the Continent) would be Active = Passive, a simple symmetry. However, some mathematicians felt the need to make own capital (equity) a separate category from liability, skewing the formula and complicating the technique. In 1665, a student of Hobbes and inspired by Bacon, the merchant William Petty, began the trend to mathematicise double-entry accounting. This was taken up by Scottish accounting teacher John Clark in 1738 and Irish mathematician William Rowen Hamilton in 1837. In 1880, the American businessman, Charles Ezra Sprague, developed an algebraic model for double-entry based on the now skewed fundamental accounting equation: assets = liabilities + equity. (Note: All these people belonged to the West.)

A significant purpose of the double-entry accounting technique – the 'language of exchange' – is to widen one's economic view of the future. From a narrow to a comprehensive view of all the activity that takes place in an enterprise. For centuries the single-entry technique was concerned with only one's own circumstance, so to speak. What comes in, less what goes out, is what's left over. The double-entry innovation allows one to see the 'other side' of each transaction or exchange, where the money comes from and where it goes to – the rest of the world. And so enables one to see oneself from the world's point of view (a so-called multiple stakeholder view).

Conventional wisdom attributes its European introduction to Hindu-Arabic numerals and the place system to Leonardo of Pisa (Fibonacci) based on his 1202 book 'Liber Abaci'. Yet there are historical hints that this new place system and Hindu-Arabic numerals were in sporadic use in the Troyes Champagne Fairs developed around the 9th century along with the Carolingian Renaissance and the Grail legend.²² From then dates threefold coinage (£.s.d) and a type of 'bill of credit', and eventually the troy ounce (31.1034g) originating in the trading hub of Troyes, France.

All this sits as the background to the Templars' work, whose 900 commanderies²³ made for a vast cohesive network throughout Europe, in the end prompting their demise. In 1494, the Franciscan friar Luca Pacioli published *Summa de arithmetica*, using the new printing press to spread this knowledge far beyond

²² The Carolingian era is often identified with around 800 A.D. when Charlemagne in Constantinople was in conversation with Harun al-Rashid in Baghdad.

²³ A commandery is a self-sufficient estate designed to generate funds to support the Order's military operations in the Holy Land.

²⁴ "The theory of this art or science is beautiful and curious, very fit for improving the minds of youth, exercising their

handwritten manuscripts. His clear instructions and pedagogical skills helped the universal technique travel quickly across Europe into the Low Countries, Germany, France, and Spain during the 16th century.

As global commerce grew more complex – with bills of exchange, credit, and long-distance partnerships – the double-entry technique proved essential for tracking assets, liabilities, and results accurately. The vast East India companies used it to manage their global operations, while in Britain Scottish merchants adopted the system and earned a reputation for the precision and rigor of their control of distant agents and managing debt.

Scottish expertise later spread throughout the British Empire and accompanied the share companies at the founding of the United States of America. The double-entry technique also crossed the Atlantic with European settlers: Dutch colonists in New Amsterdam (New York), English and Scottish immigrants in New England. Colonial merchants relied on double-entry ledgers to record transatlantic trade in tobacco, sugar, rum, and manufactured goods.

Many of the early colonists, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and John Hancock kept meticulous double-entry records, tracking expenses and earnings. George Washington kept his daily accounts and had learned double entry bookkeeping as a young lad from the widely used bookkeeping text of John Mair and his 1736 'Fundamentals of Accounting',²⁴ as did most of the founding fathers, mother's, daughters and sons of America. As a teen, Benjamin Franklin used his knowledge and practice of double-entry bookkeeping for orienting his life. It informed his vision of the world, and he used it as a life-long instrument for personal development, for guiding his enterprises and ultimately, for building a new nation.

By the time of the American Revolution, double-entry bookkeeping had become indispensable. It enabled merchants to calculate true profits, secure loans, form joint-stock companies, and finance the War of Independence. Accurate records supported economic arguments for separation from Britain and helped lay the financial foundation for the United States future growth as a commercial republic; while the first Bank of the United States was created in 1791, representing a new era of the paper money revolution in America.²⁵

wit and invention, and disposing them to a close and accurate way of thinking." John Mair 1738.

²⁵ Franklin was the first American entrepreneur and economist whose life span almost mirrored the paper money revolution in America 1690 and 1791, Franklin 1706 to 1790.

"What we have here is a failure to collaborate!"

Charles Burkam / Amsterdam, Netherlands

The above line, which is a paraphrase from the Paul Newman movie 'Cool Hand Luke', came to me when Christopher asked me to write something concerning the 'interface between the 'prior peoples' and the arriving Europeans.' While there was also a 'failure to communicate' and a huge lack of discernment due to the European's sense of superiority, the inability to collaborate or reciprocate seems to me to be at the heart of the question.

The dynamics varied with the nationality of the settlers. The Dutch established their trading outpost in New Amsterdam and did not venture further inland. The French, too, were primarily interested in trade and intermingled and intermarried as they ventured far into the vast continent. Their interactions were largely peaceful.

The British, in contrast, largely came with the intention to displace the indigenous in order to possess the land itself.²⁶ As a result, during the inter-European warring, the indigenous peoples were largely fighting on behalf of the French against the British. It is well known that the early British colonists were saved by the compassion of the New England indigenous peoples – celebrated now as 'Thanksgiving'. Those same colonists responded to that generosity with efforts at genocide. Colonial governments in New England issued at least 70 official scalp bounty proclamations between 1675 and 1760, including bounties for the scalps of children.²⁷ This was also a coercive response to the indigenous siding with the French.

Nevertheless, there was a substantial interaction between colonial leaders and leaders of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy,²⁸ also known as the Iroquois League. The founding of the Confederacy is known as the Story of the Great Peacemaker, and is now considered the oldest, participatory democracy on earth. What makes it stand out as unique to other systems around the world is its blending of law and values. For the Haudenosaunee, law, society and nature are equal partners and each plays an important role.²⁹

By the mid-1700s it was this indigenous governance based on the concept of unity achieved by their Great Law of Peace that got the attention of colonial leaders bent on independence from the mother country.³⁰ The universal values within the colonies' *Declaration of Independence* were fully in harmony with the values upon which the indigenous confederacy was based.

²⁶ Similarly, the Spanish and Portuguese conquests in Central and South America were extremely violent with enslavement and 'forced conversions' of the inhabitants to Catholicism.

²⁷ <https://upstanderproject.org/newsblog/considering-history-the-troubling-story-of-scalp-bounties>

²⁸ <https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/confederacy-creation/>

With the adoption of the 'Articles of Confederation'³¹ in 1777, the thirteen colonies had a collaborative form of governance based on the Haudenosaunee's. Unfortunately, the colonies were no more able to collaborate fruitfully with each other than they had been able to collaborate with the indigenous people upon their first arrival in the 'New World'. In 1789, the Articles were replaced with the US Constitution, which was so distant in content from the stated values in the *Declaration of Independence* that the Bill of Rights had to be added afterwards to protect those human values!

That 'failure to collaborate' in the beginning of European settlement, and which drove the change from confederative association to Federal Constitution, still lingers in the inability of current governmental, organizational and most legal forms to provide a harmonious social dynamic.

Sheri Mitchell, a Penobscot lawyer, author, teacher and activist from Maine, in her 2018 book, *Sacred Instructions*,³² characterized the differences between values of indigenous and European cultures as follows:

| Native American | Euro-american |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| communal | individual |
| elders | youth |
| cooperative | competition |
| patience | aggression |
| listen | speak |
| harmony | conquest |
| humility | arrogance |
| sharing | saving |
| inclusive | exclusive |
| wholeness | fragmentation |
| collaborating | winning |

A lesson is to be learn here: real progress will not be made until we collaborate socially and associate economically.³³



Associative Economics in Context

chb

In the US in particular, one needs to locate associative economics in its formal sense, meaning close adherence to Steiner's actual ideas and especially the link to money as bookkeeping in the context of the schools of economic thought that are very well-known in the US and hold the high ground.

²⁹ <https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/who-we-are/>

³⁰

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/thanksgiving/assets/Wampanoag%20Governance%20Essay.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/articles-of-confederation>

³² <https://www.amazon.com/Sacred-Instructions-Indigenous-Wisdom-Spirit-Based/dp/1623171954>

³³ When the false idea of "winning" is laid aside!

I have in mind the writings of Ayn Rand, for example. Though I do not take them seriously in academic terms, they have may adherents, especially in business life. Then there is the 'Chicago School' in the sense of Milton Friedman and his colleagues, with the accent on profit maximization as the sole criteria for economic activity.

How different to the idea of Richard Eells, who thought in terms of the role of a corporation being to serve customers well, to do so profitably and to generate surpluses to support culture.

Diedre McCloskey also needs taking note of, with her interest in Owen Barfield and her work to understand accounting more in the direction Steiner does, but not something she would concur with necessarily.

Then there is the Austrian School, associated with names such as Carl Menger, von Boehm-Bawer, Hayek. It is always in the background of free marketeers, with its emphasis on the individual and self-interest, and shares many contextual origins with Rudolf Steiner in that its advocates, like Steiner, were part of the 'Vienna scene' in the years from 1870 till World War 1. The key differentiation for me is whether one sides, as it were with Aristotle, for whom there are no limits to knowledge, or Kant, for whom there are. Once one says there are limits to knowledge in economics then one has chosen the road of blind obedience to the 'wisdom of the market'. Follow Aristotle, on the other hand, and one arrives at lone individuals working together associatively. For example, to arrive at 'true prices' in Steiner's sense.

True price is a theorem, not a theory. It cannot be achieved in the abstract but requires one to open 'the window if the room is cold', not fiddle with the thermometer. Even so, one can do that if one is so-minded, because economics has the power to create the world in its likeness. It is easy to go from the idea of what a price 'should be', then tinker with policy, manipulate markets and social reality to comport with one's theory.

But a theorem cannot be imposed. It serves as a guide for one's real economic actions. One has to get inside the retort and effect change by actual real activity. In this regard associative economics stands apart from all other disciplines even at their look-alike moments.

Associative economics is also not to be confused with the 'associational' economics, a varied by largely socialist or at least democratic-socialist approach. One where association appeals more to the sentiments than to science, and for this reason becomes all too easily a handmaiden to left-leaning politics.

Finally, of course, in spiritual scientific terms associative economics is predicated on ideas that come from the other side of the threshold, better put, from thinking on the other side of the threshold. That, however, can be a conversation stopper in the field of comparative economics. It is not an idea, for example, the flies in 'new economic' circles.

THE ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY STEPS OF COMPLETION

Concerning the evolution of the Goetheanum Association

The Johannes Bau Verein (Johannes Building Association) was founded in Switzerland in 1913. It was separate to its namesake created in Germany for the Munich building but eventually let go. Most of those on its board had been party to the 15 December 1911 Society for Theosophical Art and Method. They were active in literature, painting, architecture, music. The Swiss organisation changed its name in 1918 to Goetheanum Association for the School of Spiritual Science: Goetheanum Association for short. Thereby, Steiner began using the name 'The School of Spiritual Science', long before the School was actually founded.

Walking carefully with History

A report from an informal online talk given by Marc Desaulles / April 23, 2026
(Notes taken by Kim Chotzen.)

This online talk was given to a group of colleagues specially invited by Kim Chotzen for the express purpose of hearing Marc Desaulles's perspective on the proceedings of the third Special General Meeting of the Goetheanum Association on June 29, 1924.³⁴ 19 people listened carefully to Marc's understanding of what Rudolf Steiner said and intended regarding one of the more representative and pivotal events at that critical moment in the early history of the Anthroposophical Society. The session began and ended with this verse, sounded three times in German, French and English.

Du, meines Erdenraumes Geist
Enthülle deines Alters Licht
Der Christ-begabten Seele.
Dass strebend sie finden kann
Im Chor der Friedenssphären
Dich tönend von Lob und Macht
Des Christ-ergebenen Menschensinns.

Toi, esprit de mon espace terrestre
Dévoile la lumière de ton âge
À l'âme douée de Christ.
Que cheminant, elle puisse te trouver
Dans le chœur des sphères de paix
Résonnant la louange et la puissance
Du sens humain dédié au Christ.

Thou, spirit of mine earthly realm
Unveil thou the light of thine age
To the Christ-begifted soul.
That striving it can thee find
In the choir of the spheres of peace
Resounding with praise and might
Of the sense of one dedicated to Christ.

³⁴ Reference GA 252, part 31.

A more complex topic is difficult to conceive, let alone describe or expect immediate worldwide comprehension. Much depends on one's knowledge and understanding of Swiss rights life and the laws concerning associations. That said, Marc explained that the basic idea of Rudolf Steiner was to register the Christmas Society so that it could carry the full responsibility of what it gave rise to. Then, with the Society placed front and center, to de-register the Goetheanum Association. The Association would then become part of the Anthroposophical Society but as a *sub-division* called Association of the Goetheanum for the School of Spiritual Science.

This required changes to the Board of the Association such that the entire Vorstand (of the Christmas Conference) *en bloc* – i.e. not as individuals – joined the other *individual* board members of the Association. This delicate linking of two entities was not understood by the lawyers.

Complex matters were made more complex by the traces of bylaws on 3rd August 1924, linked to a law suit that Steiner lost brought by a local Roman Catholic priest. Also Steiner's own exhaustion and withdrawal from public life at Michaelmas 1924. Then on February 8, 1925 the Association became the home of the Christmas Society: a fusion that lawyers could not understand, with one set of bylaws for both the Christmas Conference and the four departments of his 'unified Society' conception:

- the administration of the Society
- buildings
- publications
- Ita Wegman's Clinic

While the gesture of the recently circulated Convent proposals is to separate these elements, they could also be kept together by way of minor changes to the bylaws.

Also, on February 8, 1925, at the 4th Special Meeting of the Association complications arose, and again on 29th December 1925, with the consequence that Rudolf Steiner's idea for the working between the Vorstand of the Christmas Society and the board of the Association was not brought into social fact.³⁵ People did not understand how to differentiate them.

Maybe, Marc wondered, Rudolf Steiner saw that the Vorstand would not be able to withstand egotism that their role can be challenged by, and the need to manage this (as he was able to) by leading from the other side of the threshold: the 'Christ in me' principle. In that case, the power of a majority might still be needed until this challenge becomes met – for the two leadership modalities are not the same.

From the other side of the threshold, when egotism is overcome – as in Steiner's case – democracy is not the operative principle. But if leaders become selfish – and maybe this is what he saw – a counterforce would be needed, even if he didn't want it to happen, in order to give protection. One could well imagine

that he would then have afforded that power to the members, just because it wasn't the time. And because we were not ready. *But not because he was ill!*

Moreover, what does it mean when people say, "it failed." It cannot fail in principle; archetypes don't fail. So now, 100 years later, let's see if they can come together after all, in the sense of the two Jesus children story.

Trust me; they're worth it!

Meg Freeling / Columbus, Ohio, USA

I have been reflecting on Christopher Houghton Budd's comments in his *From St Gallen to Spring Valley and Beyond A Timely Triptych* Spring Valley, 6-8 October 2025³⁶ where he speaks in 'a slightly impassioned way to locate us in ... the history of the so-called Bau Verein,' and shares the image that endowment (in the 1911 sense) has to contend with the habit life of the previous Gabrielic age.

It occurred to me that one way of looking at the Bau Verein 'story' can be to note that, while its name has kept changing, what it *is* did not. In a similar way, Owen Barfield describes what he sometimes calls the 'Imaginative Soul' by saying, 'To feel the seed of the Word stirring within us as imagination is to experience and explore the world as parable, metaphor, symbol, and sacrament. ... This is the heart of Goethean science.'³⁷

Rudolf Steiner, in the introduction to his book on Goethe the Scientist states, 'What is significant in the theory of the metamorphoses of plants... lies in the magnificent thought-structure of a totality of mutually interpenetrating formative forces, which proceeds from the discovery that leaf, calyx (cup), corona (crown), etc. are identical organs, and determines out of itself the details, the single stages in the evolution. ... The loftiness of this idea ... becomes clear only when one seeks to bring it to life in one's own mind, when one undertakes to rethink it. We then become aware that this thought is the very nature of the plant itself, translated into the idea and living in our own mind just as it lives in the object.'

Barfield suggests it's a matter of rising from beholding the creature to beholding the process of creation. Rudolf Steiner clarifies this further when he says, 'the Christ Impulse stands in the direct line of formative thinking... It has a sacramental character – a process of real spiritual communion.'³⁸

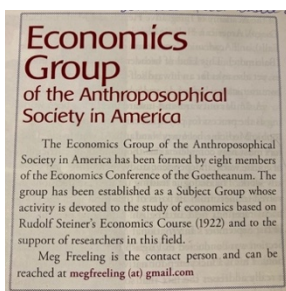
Or, as Christopher pictured it, St. Michael saying to the archangels: 'Trust me. They're worth it... They'll get it in time. They just have to get away from the back suction of the last (Gabriel) age. Really trust me. It takes a long time to get over the back pressures caused by those (earlier) events, but now things will change.'

³⁵ But that does not mean it was not a spiritual fact. – Eds.
³⁶

https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Various_pdfs/EGA_Spring_Valley_Triptych.pdf

³⁷ J. Hipolito in *Being Human*, Summer 2025.

³⁸ Quoted by Sergei Prokofieff in reference to the Spirits of Personality in *Rudolf Steiner and the Masters of Esoteric Christianity*, p.313.



A Brief History of the Economics Group of the Anthroposophical Society in America

For Mexico, Canada and the United States of America, the Economics Group of the ASA of the

Anthroposophical Society serves as a forum of members of the Society in those countries to support the work of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum.

Established as a subject matter group in America in 2017 (see letter below), the Economics Group has hosted a number of events already, including the 'Second Chance for the World' conference in Vancouver in March 2019, and the several Economics Conference Treasurers Research Meetings since. It also supported the publishing of the book by Bernard Behrens (see footnote 21).

The Group holds a monthly online discussion focused on its work to support the Economics Conference, especially in the US.

Its immediate focus is an exploration of how the Christmas Society and the Johannes Building Association (Bau Verein) – now effectively combined in the one Society – can be followed through on. And developed in the way Rudolf Steiner sought to make clear, especially as orientation to Country Societies for their own autonomous yet collaborative existence in support of the General Society. As reported on p.11, in April, a member of the Group, Kim Chotzen hosted an online meeting with Marc Desaulles, Swiss Society Treasurer and General Secretary, on this topic.

Background material for this work can be found at:
<https://economics.goetheanum.org/research/towards-2033>
<https://www.hopespringseternal.world/about/>
 Enquiries are welcome c/o economics@goetheanum.ch

Letter of Recognition from ASA Council

Hi Meg,

Thank you for your letter dated December 12th (2017) addressed to the General Council of the Anthroposophical Society in America, in which you let us know that a subject group has been formed on the subject of economics. Your letter was read by the Council at its meeting this past weekend, and we are very pleased that you all have taken up this work.

I am writing to acknowledge your effort, and to ask you a question about how to list your group on our website. As you know from the Anthroposophical Society description of groups on our website: 'There are nearly 120 groups and branches recognized by the Anthroposophical Society in America. Groups meet on a regular basis, some weekly, some monthly. In most cases, groups that have requested formal recognition have an on-going life and have built up a history of work together. There are no requirements that groups working out

of anthroposophy become officially connected with the Anthroposophical Society or with a local group or branch of the Society. Requesting formal recognition usually occurs when a group finds itself ready and able to shoulder responsibility for the life of the Anthroposophical Society in their area and wishes to link their efforts with those of the national and international societies. Types of recognized groups may include study groups, performing groups, or subject and interest groups.'

Your letter did not specifically ask for formal recognition, so we are left with the question – do you want formal recognition to be listed as a 'recognized group', or do you prefer to be listed as a 'subject group' or as an 'other group' on the 'Contacts for our groups and branches' page?

It is completely up to you what you prefer, and if you can let me know I will see that the Council is informed during its conference call in February.

Thanks, Meg, and blessings on your work!

Dave Alsop
 Chairperson / General Council of the Anthroposophical Society in America



The Question of Groups and Branches

chb

The existence of the Economics Group of the ASA raises the wide question of how Groups and Branches are understood, and whether they should

have a clear financial relationship to a Country Society. I would like to suggest as a generality that 'groups' is post Christmas Conference, 'branches' is a more Theosophical, even Masonic construct. But also in our times, 'branch' can connote being a subset of a larger organisation, as is the case with the Canadian Society. This also has regulatory and taxation consequences, as well as questions of autonomy linked to it. Obviously, things belong to the karma of any given country and it might be especially different in large non-European countries.

In Australia, I am involved with colleagues there in an exercise that shows all the variously named branches and groups on a map of the country, without political borders such as states or provinces. They then appear as locations of anthroposophical activity – in effect, islands of culture that, one hopes, would seek to find one another and over time link up and become the basis for the Consciousness Soul in that country.

...but also, as the foundation of a Country Society, just as the Country Societies carry the General Society.

However, nearly everybody one asks has a different image of what they understand a branch or group to be. So, I created a template and we are in the process of asking each 'collective' to self-identify, first by reference to the two 'options' described by Rudolf Steiner in the Christmas Conference (location and subject matter), then in terms of their own idea, and with clear reasons for their choices.

Another dimension is to be clear if a group/branch is 'formal' (with a bank account and an outward link to the Society in Australia) or 'informal' and operating on a cash basis, such as a study group.

| Legend | |
|--------|---|
| | Location (örtlichen) |
| | Subject matter (sachlichen Felde) |
| | Indeterminate / undecided |
| | Other |
| | The place where they meet together with the Anthroposophical Society in Australia as its 'partners', meaning the groups together are the (non-physical) body of the Society in Australia, which is its 'etheric' body (to borrow another idea from Marc Desaulles). |

| | Name | Type |
|---------|---------------------|------|
| Example | Threefold Branch | |
| Example | The Economics Group | |
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| etc. | | |

Interestingly, the Anthroposophical Society in Australia has no buildings of its own. Its address is c/o the incumbent General Secretary. Not quite the current case for the Anthroposophical Society in America, perhaps, but close!

The Role of Delegation and the 1933 ASA Bylaws

chb

Why do the 1933 bylaws of the Anthroposophical Society in America feature in the Summer School? One reason is because we are in effect being hosted by the Threefold Branch of the ASA, which in its early period would have been what was then called a 'recognized working group'. Every member was encouraged to join such a group, the heads of which, not the individual members directly, would collectively nominate the General Secretary and take part in meetings of the Initiative Council, chaired by the GS but in the role of president of the Society. They also would propose any changes to bylaws.

In other words, matters for discussion in the Society arrived via the heads of the Working Groups, to which one belonged (those members not in a group were de facto in a group with the General Secretary!). In effect, members did not make direct proposals; they were filtered, as it were, by a delegatory process. It was in their representative form that proposals would come to a General Meeting for affirmation by the members as such.

To my mind, this speaks reams about how citizens of the US understand themselves constitutionally. But it also has strong echoes of the Christmas Conference in that the founding meeting was based on proposals produced by the Vorstand in consultation with the General Secretary, which were then rehearsed, debated and adopted by the 800 members present. Rudolf Steiner did not ask the members what they thought he or the Vorstand should do. He led from the other side of the threshold (as Marc Desaulles puts it elsewhere in this issue). And the outcome was unanimous affirmation. In modern parlance, a democratic surplus!

I bring this to the table of constitutional discussion because I think we can all take a leaf out of the Anthroposophical Society in America's book back then. The ASA also because those bylaws, and the logic underlying them, have been covered over since with various layers of 'democratic', 'regional' and 'mandating' considerations that do not, in my judgement, come from the other side of the threshold, but from this side. They can neither endure nor provide guidance and support for those who, as our pink cards and certainly our blue cards pretend, belong to a community on the other side – even if some of us our currently incarnate.

And this is the substantial problem that needs correcting. What is currently being corrected is the outcome of the incompleteness of our early history. For that reason alone such changes will not work.

But there is another reason and that is, just as one should not start from the effects of incompleteness, but attend to the completing; so one should not start from the bylaws that Rudolf Steiner brought to earth as if he made them up in some way. One starts with the logic of relationships between human beings and the hierarchies and between human beings themselves as members of the tenth hierarchy – which the foundation bylaws are a precise expression of. Those bylaws then have to inform and find their way into the rights life of our times – not the other way round.

It is surely hubris to think otherwise.

| |
|---|
| <p>Our father which art in heaven Hallowed be Thy name Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done On earth, as it is in heaven Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Amen</p> |
|---|