



20th Annual Meeting / Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

Towards 2022 Part 4

Threefold Society as a Basis for World Economy

Continuing on towards Christmas 2021, comprising suggestions, reflections and commentary from Economics Conference colleagues around the world

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

Thrice welcome back!

Originally begun as a way of holding the 19th Annual Meeting without succumbing to the pervasiveness of screen-based social life, this publication has proved to be a valuable way of sharing research and insights as we move toward our next in-person meeting and the centennials of Rudolf Steiner's Economics Course and the Christmas Foundation Meeting.

In preparation for the upcoming meeting in Mendoza, Argentina, this edition provides a collage, of different tones reflected in the color and font choices, of thoughtful, well-documented research and insights concerning the nature of social life. The collection includes both poetic and prosaic expressions of life at the threshold in these chaotic times.

From the convenor's desk, Christopher conveys the context for the Mendoza meeting. The program titles have been nuanced to reflect both the need to understand what is meant by the threefold nature of modern social life and how, through human will, we can bring such thinking right into economic life. Myriad views and cultural perspectives are represented. A fine line is walked to balance all of this for best overall effect; many balls have been juggled and some are still in the air!

From Marc Desaulles we learn to recognize the precise limitations of democracy. His piece presents helpful and (for me) new ways of approaching the topic and the consequent necessity of new ways of working with (differentiated) money. The threefold social order theme is well treated in Fionn Meier's essay, with many direct quotes from Steiner's German text. And Mauricio Garay describes his image of how to activate associative economics in social life.

The closer we come to the centennials mentioned above, the more we find ourselves looking back in order to see the future. Meg Freeling writes about this, describing the journey Rudolf Steiner took from the first mention of the threefold nature of social life

through the Economics Course to the Christmas Conference Meeting. Continuing that journey, Daniel Dunlop and Walter Johannes Stein – remembered as part of the US Economics Group's discussion – sought to enact Steiner's thoughts. How can we carry on their work? What are our tasks now? What windows remain open even if many seem closed?

In Mendoza, we will consider the role of Groups of the Anthroposophical Society. This issue includes reports from Latin America and the USA that reveal a genuine will to understand, further and practice associative economics. But what is the nature of this work? In the context of understanding the difference between the Society and the School of Spiritual Science, Xavier Andrillon asks important questions concerning the three Classes, especially, how do we work with the Second Class?

Just as the spirit is everywhere to be seen in nature, the contributions in these pages show how glorious it will be when we find our way to recognizing it also in economic life.

Warm Michaelmas greetings,

Kim Chotzen

Modified Mendoza programme details

As a result of the exchanges among the organisers mentioned on p.2, the overall theme and lecture titles have been amended as below:

Main Theme:

Threefold Society as a Basis for World Economy

Lecture Titles:

Understanding how to threefold society
MD

Threefolding society through new ways with money
MD

Economics as a force for social change
MG

From the Convenor's Desk

This issue has been delayed a little because of Mauricio Garay's unexpected illness and the changing scene regarding covid and international travel.¹ Although Mauricio is on the mend (and thanks all those who sent their kind thoughts), I am mindful that for this and the other reasons given, the fully worldwide meeting in Mendoza may not in fact happen as planned. It may in effect become a fourth Latin American meeting, or even a mainly Argentina meeting. So the actual outcome is not yet known, but I propose we maintain the themes as proposed (see modified programme on p. 1).

I also think that our themes are too precious to be confined only to a meeting that may or may not happen in the fuller way we are hoping for, so this edition of *Towards 2022* has been produced as the basis for sharing key thoughts from colleagues so that we might all know and share what we are thinking. I am confident that this will not obviate the very special things that can happen when we meet in person, but the times are playing tricks and one of them is to prevent people actually meeting in that way.

Mendoza Meeting

The articles in the section on *Threefolded Society as a Basis for World Economy* have been invited by way of preparation for our forthcoming meeting in Mendoza. They are not a usurpation or replacement, however, in that, the good gods willing, something very different can occur when human beings actually meet in person. The more so if they are colleagues in the same cause.

What we are engaged in with the Mendoza gathering is a perhaps strange endeavour to bring into being (or render visible) a shared ground on which not only can we all converse and communicate going forwards but, in the form of a memorandum, a ground we can offer to the world at large. For, in a sense, today's chaos – even in its worst manifestations – is testament to

¹ I am also mindful that political events are now very unstable. Quite apart from the catastrophe of Afghanistan, as I wrote this in the UK fuel supplies are in disarray and the army may be brought in to ensure supply, 5000 EU truck drivers will be allowed short visas (expiring on Christmas eve!) to ensure food finds its way to the shops. Interestingly, to facilitate this, the requirement to compete between companies has been suspended by the government.

the absence of a healthy threefold ordering of society in modern affairs. And yet, in our times social order cannot come about otherwise than in this way!

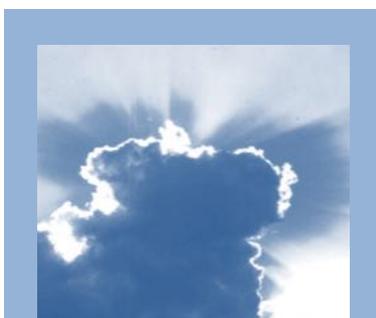
In one of our organisers' exchanges, Marc asked an important question. Although in general use in our movement, as also in this and earlier editions of *Towards 2022*, he said the idea of society as having a threefold nature was a "wrong thought".

I think this occasions considerable pause for thought, so that, if possible, we can collectively clarify this point. A main reason for doing so is that there seems to be a great need to do so.

Rereading everything in English, going back to the original English translations by Edith Maryon and others authorised by Rudolf Steiner, I fully appreciate that just because society can be seen to have three spheres (not less or more) – spiritual, rights and economic – that does not mean that society is ordered on that basis. It obviously is not because everywhere we have an increasingly unitary state that includes within its remit the responsibility for both spiritual and economic life. We have through our own deeds to give this threefoldness concrete expression. But, as I say, this requires quite a challenge to get the wording right in English, not only for our own Economics Conference community but for the entire threefold movement – at least in the English-speaking world.

The Challenge of Convening

It has always been clear to me that, as convenor of the Economics Conference, I need to distinguish between what I say in that capacity and what I say in my own professional right as an economic and monetary historian. On the other hand, convening also entails a degree of leadership, which to be effective cannot be vacuous, empty of all content, without a view and relativist, and so unable to provide any orientation or steer for wider discourse. Due to the nature of the topics considered in this issue and the varied views held, I have sought a balance between remaining silent and joining in. Hence this disclaimer.



Silver Lining

Thank you for the responses to July's *Silver Lining* email. In the interests of space and the urgency of fast moving times, we have used the more poetic and shorter of these to punctuate this edition, rather than, as we had originally thought, as a section in itself.

Threefold Society as a Basis for World Economy

Responses to email 4 August 2021

Dear Colleagues,

as you know, our main focus at the Mendoza meeting in December will be on how we collectively understand Steiner's image of threefold social life. This is a topic with many dimensions: How do we understand it conceptually, as the major contribution to sociology that it is? How do we understand it practically? Historically? As it plays out in different countries, cultures and parts of the world? As something 'the West' could not countenance and its immediate advocates could not fulfil?

The aim is to produce a memorandum that reflects how we see the threefold nature of social life living in our times, in particular as this affects economics and economic life. But this will entail two challenges. What can be accomplished in a few days together, and what if covid prevents representativeness at the gathering, or even gathering at all?

For the next issue of Towards 2022, therefore, it would be a great help if by way of preparation as many colleagues as possible shared their thoughts on this topic. How in essence do we understand Steiner's image? How do we see it playing out in the specific circumstances in which we find ourselves? Where are there hindrances? Where prospects?

Best wishes,

Christopher

I have met amazing people who I never dreamed were so awake and so clear. I have found solace where I hardly thought to look before. I have been inspired in so many unassuming ways. I was thrown back onto my own inner resources when my outer world was locked down. I mused much upon the sheer wonder of double-entry bookkeeping. And I feel alive as if I had always lived for this moment: Not I, but Christ in me.

Leif Sonstenes / Karlsruhe, Germany

Democracy is no longer enough

Marc Desaulles / Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Democracy is increasingly showing its inability to work for world peace and to deal with economic, climate or health problems. Even the Swiss way, with its federalism and its right to popular initiative and referendum, does not fare much better in its management of today's crises.

Does this mean that democracy is not a universal panacea for managing our societies and that it must be developed? The answer is yes. And to understand how, let us look at human beings as we have become. What is striking is the high degree of individualisation that characterises us. Everywhere we claim our autonomy, our freedom. In short, we say: "I want to be able to decide"; and this goes beyond what until recently was a matter of nature – such as changing sex or daring to choose the moment of death. Whatever the real meaning of freedom, it means that the future organisation of our societies must start from the individual, from the individual person. From this point of view, let us consider the main lines of a person's relationship with others. We can distinguish three main ways of interacting, each independent of the other.

One is the *needs* we have, whether they are rudimentary or more subtle – food and drink, clothing, shelter for sleeping, but also perhaps reading or going to concerts, to take just a few examples. We will want to satisfy these needs and to do so we will seek out encounters with others.

A second, equally existential but of a different nature, arises from the depths of the experience of one's own humanity within a community. It is lived in what might be called *dignity*. It gives rise to something like a sense of home, belonging or recognition.

Finally, a third way is expressed in our *capabilities*, all of which are individual, i.e. specific to oneself – whether they are intellectual, artistic or manual, innate or learned, underlying or developed. They characterise the instrument we have at our disposal to reach out to others with our specific colour, our unique tone in the great human symphony.

Needs, dignity and capabilities are three registers of our social interactions through which we create a three-dimensional social space: the economy, politics and culture. Economic life is committed to satisfying the needs of everyone in the world, political life to ensuring the dignity lived by citizens, while the development of individual capabilities must be left to the free initiative of a cultural life adapted to our time.

But the growing demand for freedom at the individual level means that needs, dignity and

capabilities are becoming more independent of each other, which requires that their social dimensions – economy, politics and culture, do the same. This is where an evolution beyond the unitary approach of democracy becomes necessary.

It is the task of the state, with its democratic institutions, above all to take care of the dignity of its citizens, to foster the necessary ground for their development with a constitution and adequate laws, and to protect them by means of a police force and possibly an army. But we have to realise that it will be less and less up to the state to keep the other two dimensions of social life under its control. The necessary evolution of democracy consists in granting autonomy to economic life, whose task will be to provide for the needs of all: as also to cultural life, to encourage the development of the capabilities, whether through the transmission of knowledge, the teaching of practices, the plurality of research, and all the forms of culture that will arise spontaneously from myriad initiatives once they are freed from the corset of democratic organisation.

In short, if democracy is reaching its limits, it is because it continues to deal with what are no longer its concern – economy and culture. To remedy this, we must consciously create structures that give economic and cultural life their autonomy as much as possible.

How can this be done? First, we have to become clear and agree on our understanding of what we mean by economic life, political life and cultural life. This is what we plan to do together during our first research sessions in Mendoza.

Then it depends on the possibilities offered by the place and the country we are in.

And yet, there is a way to bring about change wherever we are in the world. And that is with money. Because in a threefold world, money as such no longer exists: there is only money engaged in a buying process, money engaged in a lending process and money engaged in a giving process. And by acting in accordance with the nature of the working of these three monies, we induce a functional threefolding of the social organism that has far-reaching consequences.

Towards understanding the Threefold Nature of Social Life

Fionn Meier / Winterthur, Switzerland

It is now about 100 years ago when Rudolf Steiner suggested that the next step in human evolution should be to realise the threefold nature of society and not communism or western capitalism. The former he saw as a direct threat against individual development of the human being; the latter he warned will give rise to a plutocracy whereby democracy will become just a “folding screen” behind which the Plutocrats will hide their real power. Steiner formulated the idea of a threefold nature of society not as an intellectual exercise about how society can be organized instead, but because he observed some aspects within human and social evolution that in his view need an adequate organizational correspondence. Three of his important observations were:

Individualisation

Individualization is a development that begins to accelerate with the Renaissance. In its essence, it means the emancipation of the spirit (thinking) from any external guidance. In correspondence with this evolution in a first step the liberals took education out of the hands of the religious bodies and used the political body to make education available for everyone. In Steiner’s view, however, this can only be a first step as the political body will not

“Und aus diesem Drange ist hervorgegangen die moderne Forderung nach Demokratie und die moderne Art, auf demokratische Weise das Recht, das öffentliche Recht, festzulegen. Die Dinge hängen innerlich mit dem Wesen der Menschheitsentwicklung zusammen... Man muss fühlen, wie der Horizont der Menschen erweitert werden müsste, wie sie fühlen müssten: Gewiss, ich weiss nicht, was ich meinen Mitmenschen tue, indem ich diese Schraube hier fabriziere, aber ich weiss, dass ich durch die lebendigen Beziehungen, in die ich durch das öffentliche Recht mit ihnen komme, innerhalb der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung ein würdiges Mitglied, ein mit allen anderen gleich geltendes Mitglied bin. Das ist es, was zugrunde liegen muss der modernen Demokratie, und was zugrunde liegen muss, als von Gefühl zu Gefühl zwischen Menschen wirkend, den modernen öffentlichen Rechtssatzungen.“

– Steiner, 26.10.1919, GA 332.

allow the emancipation of the spirit either. Education (and any other aspect of society which depends on the emancipation of thinking) needs to become organized by individuals themselves. Only then will the human spirit become truly free.

Industrialisation

Industrialisation has given rise to major changes in the relation of the human being to labour. Whereas in the Middle Ages and up to the 19th century most labour was related to agriculture or crafts, suddenly many people started to work in places where they were just carrying out a small step in a complex production process. As Steiner and many others observed, this kind of

industrialised labour can no longer provide the individual with inner satisfaction (as for example work in agriculture does). In Steiner's view, it was the search of these workers for a new relationship to society that was the underlying factor that led to the demand for democracy. (See boxes for translations of quotations.)

"And out of this urge has come the modern demand for democracy and the modern way of democratically establishing law, public law. These things are internally connected with the essence of human development... One must feel how people's horizons ought to be broadened, how they ought to feel: Certainly, I do not know what I am doing to my fellow human beings by fabricating this screw here, but I do know that through the living relations into which I enter with them through public law, I am a worthy member within the social order, a member of equal standing with all others. This is what must underlie modern democracy, and what must underlie, as working from feeling to feeling between people, modern public law."

– Steiner, 26.10.1919, GA 332.

Steiner argued that a new relation to labour can be given with the democratic regulation of labour (especially the maximum working time in the different branches). Some steps in this direction happened already with the prohibition of child labour (maximum working time = zero) and some general restriction of maximum working hours. It is this path that needs to be continued until every worker gets a new feeling of dignity when realising that one's labour is truly respected and protected by one's fellow human beings out of their feeling for justice and not just governed by economic considerations.

Globalisation (World Economy)

A third development Steiner observed and described is the evolution of economic life from regional to national to global. The many consequences this gives rise to he described in detail in his economics course. Probably most challenging is his statement that national currencies will not allow world economy to truly come about but will lead constantly to a backlash into national economic rivalry. In his analysis, what is needed is a denationalisation of money and its transformation into a worldwide network of interlinked bookkeeping systems.

"Weil also alles im Wirtschaftsleben auf Leistung und Gegenleistung beruhen muss und weil diese beiden von verschiedenen Dingen abhängig sind, muss im Wirtschaftsleben alles beruhen auf dem Vertragsprinzip. Wir müssen in Zukunft Genossenschaften, Assoziationen im Wirtschaftsleben haben, welche ihre gegenseitigen Leistungen und Gegenleistungen gründen auf das Vertragsprinzip, auf die Verträge, die sie miteinander schliessen. Dieses Vertragsprinzip muss das ganze Leben und insbesondere das Leben innerhalb der Konsumgenossenschaft, Produktionsgenossenschaft und Berufsgenossenschaft beherrschen. Ein Vertrag ist immer irgendwie befristet. Wenn keine Leistungen mehr erbracht werden, dann hat er keinen Sinn mehr, dann verliert er an seinem Wert. Darauf beruht das ganze Wirtschaftsleben»

Steiner, 24.6.1919, GA 331.

A Question of Organisation

In some of his lectures on this topic (but not in his book *Die Kernpunkte*²) Steiner also gives clear indications about which organisational instruments are adequate for these three spheres (economic life, rights life, spiritual life). A clear understanding of these different instruments will also allow clarification of their differences. The lectures where Steiner speaks about these instruments, however, have only been made available to a wider readership since the 1970s. The absence of this concept led to confusion on the part of many proponents of Steiner's social ideas between rights life and economic life.

Thinking that any written or oral agreement is part of rights life, they started to argue – and some still argue today – that contracts are an instrument of rights life (for example, Dieter Brüll, in *Der Anthroposophische Sozialimpuls*, Verlag für Anthroposophie).

Steiner however makes a precise distinction between *contracts*, which in his view belong to the organisation of economic life, and *laws*, which belong to the organisation of rights life. As a third instrument which belongs to the organisation of spiritual life he considers the 'taking of advice'. A closer look at these three instruments will allow a deeper understanding about how these three spheres can each be organised according to its own logic.

Economic Life: Contract

As the organisational instrument to govern economic life (production, trade, consumption) Steiner describes the contract as follows:

"...everything in economic life must be based on mutual service, and because these are dependent on different things, everything in economic life must be based on the principle of contract. In the future we must have cooperatives, associations in economic life, which base their mutual services on the principle of contract, on the contracts they make with each other. This principle of contract must dominate all economic life and especially within the consumer cooperative, production cooperative and professional cooperative. A contract is always temporary... If no more services are rendered, then it no longer has any meaning, then it loses its value. The whole of economic life is based on this"

– Steiner, 24.6.1919, GA 331.

² For the meaning of 'Die Kernpunkte' see p.9 article.

A contract consists of a mutual agreement that needs to be fulfilled from both sides. For example: I make a chair for you and you provide me 50 USD. Such contracts are not bound to any national boundaries and it can be a contract between just two or as many people as are willing to join. Only those that agree and sign the contract are bound by it. Worldwide today, everyday billions of contracts are made. However, in most cases they are just driven by self-interest. Rudolf Steiner saw the need and the possibility that these contracts, if they are embedded in associative exchanges, become driven by a higher social awareness that will give rise to an economic life where human needs instead of profits will be at the centre.

Rights Life: Law

Whereas a contract is always about one or more tasks that needs to be fulfilled mutually from both sides and which loses its value as soon as mutuality is achieved, a law is an abstract rule for people living together in a certain geographical area. As such, a law effects someone only in certain cases, for example if he or she breaks the law (e.g. driving home with having too much alcohol in the blood). In Steiner's description:

"Laws are given so that state-political life, legal life, can exist. But you have to wait until someone has to act in the sense of a law, only then he has to take care of this law. Or one must wait with the application of the law until someone breaks it. In short, there is always something there, the law, but only for the eventuality that may occur. There is always the essence of eventuality, the casus eventualis. (...) So, the law is something that is there, but which must work towards eventuality. That is what must now underlie the law, the state, the political part of the threefold social organism."

– Steiner, 16.6.1920, GA 337a.

"Gesetze werden gegeben, damit das staatliche-politische Leben, das Rechtsleben bestehen kann. Aber man muss warten, bis einer nötig hat, im Sinne eines Gesetzes zu handeln, erst dann muss er sich um dieses Gesetz kümmern. Oder man muss warten mit der Anwendung des Gesetzes, bis einer es übertritt. Kurz, es ist immer etwas da, das Gesetz, aber erst für den Fall, der eventuell eintreten kann. Es ist immer das Wesen der Eventualität vorhanden, der casus eventualis. (...) Also: das Gesetz ist etwas, was da ist, was aber auf die Eventualität hin arbeiten muss. Das ist dasjenige, was nun zugrunde liegen hat dem rechtlichen, dem staatlichen, dem politischen Teil des dreigliederten Organismus."

Steiner – 16.6.1920, GA 337a.

"Das Geistesleben beruht darauf, dass in ihm die Menschheit ihre Fähigkeiten entwickeln kann für das Staats- und Wirtschaftsleben. Das ist aber nur möglich, wenn man im Geistesleben die Grundlage dafür schafft, dass man die sich entwickelnden menschlichen Fähigkeiten, die ja dem Menschen nicht einfach mit Geburt gegeben sind, sondern erst entfaltet werden müssen, sachgemäss zur Entwicklung, zur Entfaltung bringt. Es würde ein grosser Irrtum sein, wenn man glaubt, dass die geistigen und auch die physischen Fähigkeiten – letztere sind ja im Grunde genommen gleichwertig den geistigen – auf dieselbe Weise erkannt und gepflegt werden könnten wie die staatlichen und wirtschaftlichen Dinge. Das, was sich zum Beispiel auf Erziehung und Unterricht bezieht, das kann weder beruhen auf Verträgen noch auf Gesetzen oder Verordnungen, sondern es muss beruhen auf Ratschlägen, die gegeben werden zur Entwicklung der Fähigkeiten."

– Steiner, 24.6.1919, GA 331.

Laws are also valid for those who do not agree with them (or even have voted against them in parliament). However, as the laws are valid for anyone in the area where they are set, they need be decided democratically. This is the modern way; not priests or kings setting the laws, but the people together. Every person should have a vote and every vote needs to count equally. But with this it becomes also necessary that the state is responsible for laws only. If the state also becomes active in economic life (for example, managing the monetary system) or spiritual life (for example, managing the school system), democratic decisions will not be adequate anymore.

Spiritual Life: "Taking Advice"

Everything that has to do with spiritual life (education, science, religion, arts, *but also capital!*) needs to be governed by the individual. How the teacher enables children to read and write should neither be decided by the state nor by Microsoft (or any other enterprise). Only the teacher that has the ability to see how the specific child in front of him or her needs to develop its own capacities can decide from situation to situation what to do. But even if the teacher knows how a child can learn best, in reality he or she can only ever give advice. It is the free will of students to learn new capacities that brings them forward. This is also true for the doctor, the music teacher and the scientist. They only can give advice to those who search for it. As Steiner states:

"Spiritual life is based on the fact that humanity can develop its capacities for the rights life and the economic life. This is only possible, however, if one creates the basis in spiritual life for the proper development of the developing human capacities, which are not simply given to man at birth, but must first be developed. It would be a great mistake to believe that the spiritual and also the physical capacities – the latter are basically as important as the spiritual – could be

recognised and nurtured in the same way as political and economic matters. That which relates to education and teaching, for example, can be based neither on contracts nor on laws or ordinances, but must be based on advice given for the development of capacities."

– Steiner, 24.6.1919, GA 331.

The more the people discover from whom they can get the right advice, the faster the spiritual life will develop. Spiritual life needs liberty, not egotism. It's about discovering each other's different capacities and learning as much as possible from one another.

A Michaelic Impulse

Steiner formulated his observations and ideas over 100 year ago. This can lead to the question whether his ideas are still valid today. Steiner himself states the ideas of threefold society will be valid for about 300 to 400 years, then evolution of humanity will again ask for new forms to organise society:

"Now the demands of the times have made the threefold nature of society necessary. And there will again come a time when the threefold nature must be overcome. But that is not the present time, that is the time in three to four centuries. Then we will have to think again how to replace the threefold society.

– Steiner, 28.9.1919, GA 192.

It might be of interest that this time period exactly corresponds with the current Michaelic Period (1879 - 2300). Having this in mind I would like to question the idea (which I have come across in various instances) that Steiner, after he stopped his lectures and activities in Germany and Switzerland, thought that the chance to realise it was over and humanity had to wait until there is a second chance in one hundred years (which would be today). First, I could not find any place where Steiner makes such a statement. Second, in August 1922, just after he has given his economics course in Dornach, he states in Oxford that it would be good if the book "Die Kernpunkte" would now be read in the West and in Russia:

*"That is why I believe that in the future my "Core Points" should be read more in the West and in Russia, that in Germany today they actually stand there without any possibility of being effective. For in the West, for example, one can still see a great deal in this book, because it shows, without utopia, how the three parts should stand side by side and work together. **For the West, it is quite indifferent as to the point in time**, for there too there is still much to be done in regard to the correct arrangement of the three branches, spiritual life, economic life, state-legal life."*

– Steiner, 28 August 1922, Oxford.

He does not state that a chance has been missed in the West. He also does not state that in the West one has to wait until there is a second chance.³ It is in the hands of the people in the

West to realise it at any time. There is no historical hindrance other than the lack of Michaelic thinking of the people actually on earth. However, what will happen if the West does not take the step towards a threefold society he states very clearly: *"The Anglo-American world may gain world domination: without realising the threefold nature of society it will, through this world domination, bring upon the world cultural death and cultural disease"*

– Steiner, 15.12.1919, GA 194.

"Jetzt ist notwendig geworden durch die Zeitforderungen die Dreigliederung. Und es wird wiederum eine Zeit kommen, wo die Dreigliederung überwunden werden muss. Aber das ist nicht die jetzige Zeit, das ist die Zeit in drei bis vier Jahrhunderten. Dann wird man wiederum denken müssen, wie man die Dreigliederung ablösen kann."

– Steiner, 28.9.1919, GA 192.

*"Deshalb glaube ich, dass in der Zukunft meine «Kernpunkte» mehr gelesen werden sollten im Westen und in Russland, dass sie in Deutschland heute eigentlich ohne eine Möglichkeit des Wirkens dastehen. Denn im Westen zum Beispiel kann man trotzdem an diesem Buche sehr viel sehen, denn es stellt ohne Utopie einmal hin, wie die drei Glieder eben nebeneinanderstehen und ineinandergreifen sollten. Da ist es für den Westen **ganz gleichgültig in Bezug auf den Zeitpunkt**, denn auch da ist noch viel zu tun in Bezug auf die richtige Gliederung der drei Strömungen, Geistesleben, Wirtschaftsleben, staatlich-rechtliches Leben.»*

– Steiner, 28. August 1922, Oxford.

³ CHB – Although I think others have thought it (e.g. at Emerson College in 2012 there was a conference on this topic), to my knowledge the idea of a second chance is largely my assumption. So, I think I should own my responsibility in this regard! I remain of the view that this is the case, otherwise why write these columns in this precise moment in history? But I admit the idea has no reality until and unless it is inhabited by people who have ideas and whose conduct originates from the other side of the threshold, enabling them to create their own ground or soil on this side. For more background, see *1919 And All That*, <https://aebookstore.com/publications/chb-collected-works/full-chb-list/1919-reparations-and-all-that/>.

Threefolded Society. Economics as a Force for Social Change

Mauricio Garay / Mendoza, Argentina

Several questions arise as we approach the hundred years since the *Economics Course*⁴ and look at what the context for this course was in 1922. How is humanity going to find a solution to the 'social question'? What is the path we must take to reach this target?

At the 20th Annual Meeting of the Economics Conference planned to take place in Mendoza, Argentina, we will consider how Rudolf Steiner's *Economics Course* is understood in relation to what is often referred to as the 'threefold social order'. Special attention will be given to how the threefold nature of social life is implicit to associative economics as precisely described in the *Economics Course*.

When one observes social life today, there is currently a monolithic paradigm of the social organism caused by the state being regarded as responsible for all three spheres – spiritual, rights and economic – rather than confining itself to the rights life only. In this way, the three spheres described by Rudolf Steiner are fully centralised as if we were living in an inverse theocracy. Meaning presidents behave as some sort of kings, as in old times, and in some countries as if following them could become a religion.

In such a situation, human beings regard themselves as little more than intelligent monkeys, where the brain centralises everything in the human body and people satisfy their needs with capitalism and modern technology. In doing so, they fail to perceive society as threefolded.

As a result, we must learn, as Goethe would suggest, to look again and see better through spiritual science. It is then that with our will forces we may recognise a threefolded organisation of the human being. This might allow a different possibility; leading to every human being realising one stands at the threshold giving one the possibility of applying one's will forces to the social organism and actually managing to threefold it, differentiating between the different spheres – cultural, rights and economic life.

In our meeting in Folkestone in 2019, Daniel Nicol Dunlop's path in life and our discussion of capital and money served as inspiration to me for an image I want to share and would like to further in our meeting in December 2021.

I learned in that imagination and confirmed in life that *ideas* are like water drops prior to going

down a waterfall. A single drop standing right before going down the fall has pure potential energy and only when it falls does its speed increase, transforming potential energy into kinetic energy. Only if we make everything possible at the bottom of that waterfall to collect all that kinetic energy with a turbine, can we then take the chance to satisfy energy needs.

That may be an image of how to describe economic life. Cultural life continuously fills us with ideas, capacities and gifts in massive waterfalls which cannot go into the world because economic life does not provide the right means to ground them and put them into effect. Economic life must help cultural life to deploy capacities in the social organism and not the other way around.

Only by developing a healthy feeling does it become possible to recognise the different spheres of the social organism. I hope that our meeting together will help us in this process. I am convinced that when we reach that point, we might all then conclude that economic life is the gateway to a free spiritual life and we could see it become a force for a transformed threefolded society.

An example of three colleagues busy furthering associative economics in Latin America

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⁴ *Economics – The World as One Economy*, R. Steiner, [1922]. Associative Economics Worldwide, 2014.

Threefold Society / Threefold Economy / Threefold Finance

Christopher Houghton Budd

In the anthroposophical movement, where alone the idea of a threefold social life exists, there are many who think this can be brought about by external actions of various kinds. But how real is this expectation?

In 1919, Rudolf Steiner published his (best-selling) book, *Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage (Cardinal Aspects of the Social Question)*. This has been variously translated into English – inter alia, *The Threefold State, The Threefold Commonwealth, Towards Social Renewal* – when it would have been far better to have opted for *The Threefold Nature of Social Life*, for that is a very clear statement regarding Rudolf Steiner's place in the social sciences generally and sociology in particular.

One word that does *not* convey Steiner's social analysis clearly is 'threefolding', which is not a good or even accurate translation of the original German. Threefolding is a gerund and so uncertain as to whether it is a noun or verb – a thing or an activity. In this case, it is also rendered hapless in the face of those who would burden it with a meaning it was neither designed for nor apt to be given. In contrast, 'the threefold nature of social life' is a description of what is, implying that its user directly perceives what is being referred to rather than relying on someone else's perception (in this case, Rudolf Steiner's).

For this reason, it also does not lend itself to being used as a slogan or political rallying point, which was never Rudolf Steiner's image or intention.⁵ Admittedly, 'the threefold nature of social life' (rather than 'threefold social order') inhibits thinking in terms of abstractions and theories, requiring us to speak instead in terms of our own perceptions of this threefold nature in the social surroundings and institutions where we live.

The above 'quibbling' notwithstanding, the threefold nature of social life is hardly news. Plato had three groups – guardians, auxiliaries, and producers. The Middle Ages had three estates – clergy, nobles, peasants. Montesquieu sought the separation of Judiciary, Legislature, Executive. Even non-Marxists speak of upper, middle and lower classes.

⁵ See Rudolf Steiner's many almost *en passant* comments in *The Art of Lecturing*, Mercury Press, 1984 (GA 339).

Since Steiner's time, other threefold constructs have been created. The First, Second and Third Worlds – meaning white capitalism, communist regimes (especially the Soviet Union), and those (sometimes fictitious) countries that experienced twentieth century wars of national liberation, mainly former colonies of nineteenth century empires. Believing, after Woodrow Wilson, self-determination of all peoples to be a sacrosanct principle of the West, they sought to elect their own governments and re-appropriate their own resources, only turning to Marxism when this aim was frustrated by the erstwhile imperial powers, who to this day control the UN, for example. Then there is the threefold concept of business, government and civil society, imprecisely if not erroneously described by many 'threefolders' as a version of the economic, rights and spiritual spheres.

So... what is novel when Rudolf Steiner speaks of the three spheres of spiritual life, rights life and economic life? Firstly, not the idea of spheres so much as their autonomy one from the another. In other words, the shift from monolith to differentiation, an effect of the 'I' outside displaced by the 'I' inside, emerging from the other side of the threshold to this.

Os Noves

Onde olhar... pra ver a luz?
Como agir... pra acertar?
Apenas olhe em outro olhar e vai.

Lucia Sigolo / Sao Paulo, Brazil

Second, when we track the evolution of Steiner's efforts to give this fact the upper hand when designing modern social life – something that was not possible until 'now' (i.e. post 1879) – do we point to 1917 or

1919, to the Circle of Thirty (Dreisigger Kreis) or the first Waldorf School? Or the Economics Course, where Steiner remarked that in four years four hundred had gone by? Or do we alight on the 1923/4 Refounding of the Anthroposophical Society, when against all the odds Rudolf Steiner secured the fact of threefold society for all to see – if we would just open our eyes to what he did and refer less to what we think he did... or did not do?

Next, what of our own lives and institutions and our own spiritual, political and economic actions? Do they give evidence of the threefold nature of social life? Do we participate in today's generalised bi-party political systems thinking they would exist in a threefold society? Where do we place judges – in the spiritual or the rights life? And do we share Steiner's (negative) view of social democracy? Can the threefold nature of social life come to expression in the twofold, either/or constructs born of nineteenth century occultism, such as Left vs. Right, Capitalism vs. Communism, West vs. Islam, State vs. Market, Keynes vs. Hayek? Likewise, can the UN, WTO, WHO, World Bank and IMF – not to mention the EU – exist in a threefold 'space'?

More complex still. What of the West's point-blank refusal of Steiner's ideas and everything put in place since, beginning with the Treaty of Versailles? Surely, the purpose of such things is not to be found in high-sounding statements about them but in their occluding what Rudolf Steiner sought to bring attention to?

Which of today's local, national and global institutions and laws (even constitutions) would survive so-called 'threefolding'? What, if anything, would need to be put in their stead? How will the advocates of threefold change be heard or get published? Or be protected? Especially those who advocate Steiner's monetary ideas in the USA. Will they be spared the fate some say befell Lincoln and Kennedy?

Finally, what form would the three kinds of money take, such that today's financial system could be rebased? Or how (the same question) will the initiatives of those now incarnate and yet to come be financed so that they direct finance, not the reverse?

Some question my thesis that, because of Steiner's persistent and consistent expectation that the West has to repair the damage it is responsible for, one has to 'start' any external championing of the threefold nature of social life in the very domain where it is thought to be most absent – 'western' finance. Among many citations I could offer in support of this approach, I will end with this 'think piece' with this one:

"When lecturing on economic conditions, the main point is that we speak directly from experience. If, in the spirit of the threefold organism, one speaks about economic relationships, one should not permit the belief to arise that there could even be such a thing as a theoretical political economy. Instead, one should limit the main discussion to describing cases taken from the economic life itself; either cases that one repeats, or cases that one construes how they should be or could be. But with the latter cases – saying how they should or could be – one must never neglect to speak out of economic experience. Actually, when lecturing on the economic life, one should speak in an epic style. Particularly, when presenting what is written in the *Kernpunkte*, one should speak as if one had no preconceived ideas at all concerning the economic life, and have no notions that this should be thus and so; instead, one should speak as if one were informed on all and everything by the facts themselves."⁶

For me, the key to this attitude and indeed methodology lies in the objectivity to be found in accounting when understood in the sense of associative economics.

⁶ Ibid, p. 80.

Thank God our Time is Now

Dark and cold we may be, but this
is no winter now. The frozen misery
of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move;
the thunder is the thunder of the floes,
the thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.

Thank God our time is now when wrong
comes up to face us everywhere,
never to leave us till we take
the longest stride of soul men ever took.

Affairs are now soul size.
The enterprise is exploration into God.

Where are you making for? It takes
so many thousand years to wake,
but will you wake for pity's sake.

– *A Sleep of Prisoners*
Christopher Fry (1907–2005)

Ro Naastepad Rotterdam, Netherlands

This is not original as it appeared on the Summer 2020 cover of New View. But it is beautiful. Happy St. Johns!

Between East and West

Rudolf Steiner

"Two poles confront each other, West and East, and we in the middle have the task of looking to the West and avoiding its errors, of looking to the East and ourselves cultivating what must otherwise be imposed upon us, not in the course of centuries but in a few decades, because if men will not impose tasks on themselves others will impose them.

Ours is the task here in Central Europe of cultivating what can be cultivated only out of the threefold social organism. Today, were eastern culture to predominate, the earth would be inundated by a vague mysticism, inundated by a theosophy with no reality. Were predominance to arise in the West, we should be dominated, tyrannised over by a purely material life.

Then the task should be ours to ward off from mankind two terrible sources of harm by a rational threefold State, giving independence to the economic life and to the life of the spirit, and making it impossible for the State to drive these things so far that we ourselves are crushed between East and West."

– *The Social Basis for Primary and Secondary Education*, Stuttgart, 1 June, 1919 GA 192, Lect. 3.

Deeper Considerations...

The Christmas Conference, the Economics Course, and the Threefold Social Life: How do they relate?

Meg Freeling / Columbus, USA

During the Christmas Conference of 1923, to introduce each day's reading of the Foundation Stone Meditation, Rudolf Steiner spoke a version of the following invitation: *Let us fill our hearts with the words which, out of the signs of the times, are to give us, in the right way, the self knowledge we need.*⁷ This set the tone for the whole Conference.

There is a living language, a uniting thread, that links the 1923 Christmas Conference with the 1922 Economics Course and both of these with the 1919 initiative for the Threefold Social Life. If we "walk the triangle" between these three forms that Rudolf Steiner gave us we can recognize that they in-form each other, their differences enhance each other, and life is given new dimension through their interflow. All three come to life in different ways even as the same living essence is evident in each.

At the center, what unites and holds these three themes together is the human quest for self knowledge. The search to know one's Self awakens a more precise seeing (imagination), a deeper listening (inspiration), and an enhanced ability to take initiative (intuition). It can also reveal the significance of – and the relationships between – the three points on this triangle.



A Threefold Social Life

In essence, instead of dividing the world (often arbitrarily) into nations with boundaries and each nation taking full responsibility for all aspects of

⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The Christmas Conference of the General Anthroposophical Society, 1923/1924*, Anthroposophic Press, 1990, p 110. This translation is made from the 4th edition in German (1985) and based on the original edition published by Marie Steiner in 1944.

life, but only within its own boundaries, the world – more accurately, the earth – begins to experience itself as a living being. The earth as a single living being is a familiar image in the physical sciences, but not yet in the social realm. This is new territory requiring new thinking capacities, new language, a new 'grammar', to understand the structures we are actually living within as a single living organism.

The basic threefold social life terminology is familiar enough: the economic life, the rights life and the cultural life. But what these terms mean and the scope of action in each gets confusing. It's too easy to become trapped in the old paradigms, making it difficult to answer basic questions, like Where is spirit? Where is matter? In what ways do these two relate to one another, given the earth as a living being with a threefold social life?

The flurry of threefolding began during WW1 as an effort to introduce a positive counter-action to the unsolvable tensions of the War. Through meetings with Count Maximilian von Baden⁸, Rudolf Steiner saw the possibility for an immediate application of the threefold idea in Germany. However, when the Count failed to follow through on his promise to introduce the essential memo to his colleagues, that chance was lost. Then through a newspaper article, Steiner learned that von Baden had chosen to side with Woodrow Wilson as a way to end the war. It became clear to Rudolf Steiner that a whole new approach was now needed if a threefold social life was ever to be realized. An in-depth study of economics became a key element in this new focus, and it emerged when Rudolf Steiner presented his course on economics in Dornach in the summer of 1922.

The Economics Course

In 1922, after the War had ended, Rudolf Steiner introduced the Economics Course with this statement: "...when the War was over, people said: 'Now that we have knocked each others' heads in, rather than resolve the contrasts, what is to be done? ... For life depends on contrasts, and can only exist if contrasts are there, interacting with one another. The question is which are the right contrasts for our time? And in 1919 I sought to draw attention to the real contrasts toward which world-historic evolution is tending, namely, those that arise between the economic life, the rights life and the cultural life when these are seen as distinct but coordinated aspects of the social order as a whole." "[However,] the position is now such that we can no longer speak in the same forms as we did then. Today another language is necessary; and

⁸ Peter Selg, *Rudolf Steiner: Life and Work, Volume 4, (1914-1918, The Years of World War I)*, Steiner Books, 2016. p 335-6. (7 Volumes)

that is what I want to give you in these present lectures.”⁹ And thus the *Economics Course* began.

In it, he taught that economic life is not an opposite realm to the cultural life, but is, rather, a reflector of it. Like a mirror, it helps us see the reality of our lives. The mirror is not to be blamed for what we see in it, nor can we expect it to change itself. Because economic life reflects back the concrete actions of human beings, the starting point for change “lies in the revised actions of human beings, especially in regard to how these actions play out in the economic realm.”¹⁰

The 1923 Christmas Conference

In his book, *The Foundation Stone*,¹¹ Willem Zeylmans van Emmichoven, a participant in the original 1923 Christmas Conference in Dornach, Switzerland, described the laying of the Foundation Stone “into the hearts” of those who attended this unique event:

“When the Foundation Stone of the General Anthroposophical Society was laid, it was possible to experience this event as a Mystery, whose deep significance will only reveal itself to mankind as time goes on. Rudolf Steiner said at the time that his task was to give to the Society the “form needed to foster the Anthroposophical Movement.”

“...if viewed as a whole, (it) appears as a kind of spiritual attempt to prepare a group of people for higher future tasks by means of an initiation... Its peculiarity was that it took in ever larger groups of people, and addressed them with increasing directness as a community born out of the spirit.”

“The foundations were laid for the way of initiation proper to this age. To begin with, each person must tread this path on his own. But its

⁹ *Economics: The World as One Economy*, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁰ *Guarding the Shores: Exploring Hibernia*, Anthroposophical Society in Ireland, 2020. Appendix: “From Hibernia to Globalisation”, Anita Grandjean, Christopher Houghton Budd, Marc Desaulles, 1998, pp. 183-191.

¹¹ *The Foundation Stone*, Willem Zeylmans Van Emmichoven, Temple Lodge, 2002, pp. 15-17. Translated from German to English by John Davy. Originally published in German as *Der Grundstein* in Stuttgart, 1956.

essential feature is that the pupil, as he learns to know himself more deeply as an individual, begins also to experience himself as a part of humanity as a whole. The Ego of each individual is prepared to become the bearer of the Ego of mankind. The individual human being grows towards humanity; mankind lives as a whole in each individual.”

The 1923 Christmas Conference contains an ongoing source of strength, discernment and enthusiasm that is more than equal to the tasks ahead.

How are the above three themes related?

These themes represent a historical progression of responding with new initiatives to the signs of the changing times.

In 1919, Rudolf Steiner's book, *Towards Social Renewal*¹², was published to introduce the possibilities of a **Threefold Social Life**. There was a short window of time when the surge of events in Europe was ripe for this undertaking. Every effort was made through public lectures and private meetings to give it reality through the governing bodies that could make it happen. However, despite all these efforts, it was overwhelmed by the sway of larger world events. Even though the seed for the threefold social life had been planted, a new approach was now needed.

In 1922, Rudolf Steiner revealed a key component of this new approach. The **Economics Course** was a

brilliantly crafted reframing of economic life that could go more deeply into the underlying assumptions that were blocking needed changes. It asked individuals to develop the kind of thinking now required to build a language through which the fluidity of economic relationships could be understood. He re-introduced bookkeeping as a foundation for tracking three kinds of money flows, and recognized bookkeeping itself as the world's money. This *Economics Course* laid a foundation for a one-world economy able to move into its true role as an independent organ responsive to the transparent realities of the world's actual flow

¹² Concerning the titles in English, see article on p9.

she said you can't come
vaccinations required
for the good of all
I fall to my knees gasping
I am dying to be born

freedoms are eclipsed
as socializations bend
natural human trust
to narrow diversity
with questionable rulings

alone in a wild
mess of earthen confinements
eye to eye with sharp
deposits of culture's shame
a thief of dignity's crown

the door cracks open
light leaks across green tree tops
wind trembles grasses
scattering seeds for future's
unfolding manifold life

secrets of man view
shared resources as pillars
of truth commanding
social will to liberate
creative honor for all

the women gather
round economic form
sewing rows of numbers with
a common council to birth
free associative wisdoms

Lorene Allen / Sebastopol, USA

of values. It thus provides a new ground from which to start.

In 1923-4, Rudolf Steiner invited anthroposophists from around the world to attend the **Christmas Conference** for the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society. Through this Deed, a 'turning' occurred that drew earlier related events into a new form, a new framework, and a new set of circumstances, to become participants with new roles to enact in a new kind of 'Mystery Play'. The Christmas Conference thus provides a new relation to spirit.

The progression of the above initiatives in response to the signs of the changing times can lead us into a renewed appreciation for both the different purposes of each initiative and the harmony that comes from staying true to the highest aims of the spiritual beings who are creating the new possibilities that can unite us in our striving.

If one were to "walk the triangle" shown above, stepping from the introduction of the *Threefold Social Life* through the *Economics Course* to the *Christmas Conference*, the 'journey' could bring one back to the *Threefold Social Life* with new insight to see what is possible, and new strength to take the initiatives most appropriate to our time.

"Let us fill our hearts with the words which, out of the signs of the times, are to give us, in the right way, the self knowledge we need."

Peter Selg sets the Bar! *chb*

Reading Peter Selg's *What School of Spiritual Science did Rudolf Steiner want?* (Verlag des Ita Wegman's Institut, 2011), one can see that he had in effect produced a list of questions that one can ask oneself in order to assess whether one's activities are a match for what Rudolf Steiner was hoping for. And still is!

As regards [my field of activity], have I:

- Transformed it at its core or merely supplemented it additively?
- Entered into critical and constructive dialogue with academics with interest?
- Is my activity and its results exceptional and

with standing in the world?

- Do I, as I should, shun public relations exercises?
- Have I undertaken positive tasks that 'people out there' can respect?
- Are my efforts directing the world to the good or to myself?
- Am I 'having a say in the present' (RS)?
- Am I active in the world or only at the Goetheanum? (i.e. whence comes my income?)
- What have I achieved? How productive

Auditing Ourselves

Xavier Andrillon: This is a great audit (referring to Peter Selg) that puts one in front of the threshold. These are basically indicators for Statute 9 and the Third Class. But our challenge is also with the Second Class, how to work together. We might also want to develop criteria to audit this.

Christopher Houghton Budd: Few people take this issue seriously; most are content that there is 'only' one class. This is at the root of everything. It is precisely this notion – and the world that is built up around it – that prevents the anthroposophical movement from stepping into its true destiny. It also gives power to today's brotherhoods.

XA: It's a shame that people do not research anymore about this topic. I really wonder about the Second Class and would love to hear what people think. What does it mean to do spiritual research together? Steiner said it's almost the same as a university, so it shouldn't be such a mystery?

CHB: There is neither acceptance of the three Classes nor is there a true Section for Economics. In my view these things go together and by that measure we are very many miles from home.

Oser s'engager! Nous venons de fêter la clôture annuelle de notre formation «Oser l'indépendance», neuf mois passés ensemble sans discontinuer, presque en famille, à l'écart des restrictions sanitaires. En cinq ans, quarante jeunes sont entrés sur ce chemin d'initiation: apprendre une économie associative, approfondir sa connaissance du monde et de soi-même et participer à un travail qui fait sens. La demande reçue en 2004 – le temps du Cours des Entrepreneurs – de pouvoir passer une année pour s'engager à nos côtés est devenue réalité.

C'est remarquable de vivre la métamorphose qui s'opère dans ce temps. L'éclat dans leurs yeux, la poignée de main... une lueur d'espoir.

Marc Desaulles
Neuchâtel. Switzerland

Economics Groups in North and South America

A number of colleagues in North and South America are working in the sense of groups of the Anthroposophical Society based on subject matter, in this case associative economics. The following contributions reflect their work in recent months and years.

What a Programme!

Lucia Sigolo / São Paulo, Brazil

As you know, a group of us from Latin America has been meeting by internet once a month since last year. Even with all the difficulties, this on-line "gathering" has been for me a very special moment. I feel I touch base with my dear brothers and sisters on earth. I feel quite at home with them. In my understanding, our group, and I mean all Economics Conference fellows, came about to have the same important quest in life. I see that we all try our best to develop the understanding of economics on behalf of truth, love and liberty in the world.

During these Latin American on-line meetings, we have been sharing our personal works, studies, information about our countries, our achievements at work. We have also kept general conversations and we talk sometimes about this astonishing pandemic situation.

I know you all have had news about that. Some brave colleagues have managed already to write. And also, we have had, Kim, and Christopher and Lorene joining us one or another time. Recently we have had the wonderful news that our colleagues Mauricio and Natalia are organizing our next Economics Conference Meeting in Mendoza.

At first, I was very surprised to learn that the general theme would be "The Threefold Nature of the Social Organism". Since 2011, when I first started coming to Economics Conference meetings, the "threefold order" (as I used to call it) was not a subject that we would look at. Then, I thought it was a good idea, for some reasons I can think right now: the greatest importance Rudolf Steiner gave to the subject – the known 'non understanding' of what he meant by it; the possibility of integrating this study with other areas in Anthroposophy (we all talk about the Three Spheres of the Social order – but what it is and for what use?); the state of the social

relations in the World right now. The mess we live in, I mean.

In order to warm up the subject, our online group, has started giving attention and time to the Threefold Nature of the Social Order. We have been looking at some of Steiner's texts, especially the Oxford lectures (GA 305), and we are now all reflecting about the subject. We had already two encounters where we looked at the subject.

In regard to Steiner's work, I've been reading again and again the 1905/1906 text published in Lucifer Gnosis (*Spiritual Science and the Social Question*), and the 3 conferences given in Oxford in 1922 and published by Rudi Lissau (*Threefold The Social Order*¹³), said by some to be the first and last works on social matters.

Now we are going to try to start answering Christopher's questions in his "Message to Colleagues from Convenor": How in essence do we understand Steiner's image? How do we see it playing out in the specific circumstances in which we find ourselves? Where are there hindrances? Where prospects?

What a program!! So, let's work, do our part, and hope to be helped by the spiritual world. In my concern, I am trying hard to find valuable insights into what could help to bring some light into any context. What I know so far is that I'm looking very much forward to seeing you all again very soon next December in Mendoza.

O Nature, your maternal life
I bear within the essence of my will.
And my will's fiery energy
Shall steel my spirit striving,
That sense of self springs forth from it
To hold me in myself.

Calendar of the Soul 26. Michaelmas.

Food for Thought

Xavier Andrillon / Campinas, Brazil

Christopher asks: "What is a group based on economics?" In the following, I assume that the role of subject matter groups would be to advance spiritual science, the foremost (only?) task of the School and EC members as per Statute 9 of the Founding Statutes. I would think differently if the goal was to 'spread the word' or to develop study groups, where geographically-based groups could be more appropriate.

¹³ <https://aebookstore.com/publications/associative-economics-worldwide/authors/rudolf-steiner/threefold-the-social-order/>

First off, associative economics is universal. The 1922 course makes the point that thinking in terms of regions or nations no longer makes economic sense. There is only one world economy, and rue price, personal credit or the damming of capital are non-geographic concepts.

Also, for me economics is a very broad topic. To do something concrete with it, we need to break it down into more specific and manageable topics, such as: How to capitalise people? How to further viable long-term land tenure? And so on.

A subject matter group would be much more effective if it focused on a research question. If there were a group on land tenure, say, the conversation would be richer if people from different parts of the world met to answer the same questions. They would share and compare their local perspectives and case studies with people who have access to different, complementary, empirical data and insights.

No definitive statement in the above, just food for thought.

Polarities exacerbated.

Social distance.

Clamor of contrasts

Contrasts are valid! For we know ourselves because we become distinct.

But now that we see the differences, think again! Repent! Change thy ways!

Metanoia – a reversal of thought, with an accompanying action.

We cannot atomize anymore lest we blow ourselves and the whole world to pieces being right.

In the spaces between is the I of the world – the I that is in you and me.

It is not my will over Yours that must prevail. Thy will be done!

But how do we know Thy will and if it is done?

It is the silver lining of this clamor of contrasts – this opportunity to know god.

And is it perhaps a one-world currency that we all share and no one owns, That will one day lead the differentiated peoples to a freely traveled path back to coherence?

And is this the beginning moment??

Kim Chotzen / Viroqua, USA

World History through Economics

Daniel Osmer / Sebastopol, USA

Providing a story-telling device and explanatory tool, a world-history-through-economics image is needed in order to integrate and visualize the many historical threads that need to be gathered to comprehend the ever-changing nature of the worldwide social organism in relationship to the developing human being.

During Greco-Roman times human beings made considerable progress toward establishing the rights and dignity of the emerging individual. The 13th and 14th centuries saw a time of transition where individuals emancipated themselves from a dictated existence resulting in an explosion of creativity, initiative and invention.

the possibility for an emerging kind of money that had accumulated from centuries of trade that would now be made available for future and long enduring projects. Steiner referred to this as *loan money*¹⁴ what in conventional economics is called a 'store of value' function.

A third phenomenon gradually arises through the conscious activity of balancing the polarity of payment (trade money) and loan money (capital money) – a 'gift money'.

Economic values created by mutual trade circulate through the three domains of society – economic life, the life of rights between us, and the cultural/spiritual life. The three kinds of money¹⁵ in the form of universal bookkeeping make it possible to perceive these 'invisible' values, for they are ever fluctuating and changing as they circulate between the three distinct domains of:

- trade in goods & services / economic life/purchase money / MX
- investment in productive enterprise / rights life/loan money / SV
- renewal of culture and education / cultural life/gift money / UA

"We have had payment and loan. The third thing is gift. Payment, loan and gift – this is a real trinity of concepts, essential to a healthy economy."¹⁶

¹⁴ 'Loan' in this sense should not be confused with lending in the modern sense of a bank loan. Debt and equity are both considered loan money as an economic category not a financial instrument

¹⁵ *Economics*, op. cit., Lecture Eight, "Mutually incommensurable things are exchanged for each other in the economic process." (It is three kinds of money that makes this possible. – DO.)

¹⁶ *ibid.* Lecture Six.



Threshold Economics

Patrick O'Meara /
Washington, DC, USA

If as members of the Economics Conference we take up the idea of the threefold nature of the social organism there arises an obvious question: How does this idea relate to associative economics as expressed in the Economics Course?

It is easy to say, and is true, that the two describe the same thing from different perspectives. Indeed, associative economics is found in seed form in *Towards Social Renewal* in the presentation of land, labor and capital as non-tradeable boundaries of economic life. And in multiple ways the *Economics Course* provides support to the threefold idea, as seen clearly in the description there of the economic necessity for gift money to finance a free cultural life. But there does seem to be a significant difference in orientation between the two that is important to keep in mind when seeking to realize them in today's world.

This has to do with the threshold experience that the two point to and perhaps are based on.

In the *Economics Course*, it is explained that the threshold that makes associative economics a necessity is experienced when we arrive at the closed system of a single world economy. In approaching this threshold humanity is inevitably presented with the great instability and chaos that result from sticking with unworkable and uneconomic practices, laws and ideas. The close connection between this instability and chaos and our way of doing business is one that is easily grasped even when the ability for humanity to create a healthy, stable economic life through truer ways of doing business is doubted. At this threshold it is clear that external circumstances are demanding that something new happens. In the presentation of the idea of the threefold social organism, Rudolf Steiner similarly explains that this idea is a necessity for our times because humanity has crossed a threshold beyond which its old ways of organizing itself no longer work. But the threshold is not described in terms of our arriving at a single, closed economy. Instead, it is described more in terms of the experience of workers that society does not recognize their humanity, that is, their right to be provided a fair exchange for what they contribute to economic life, and the experience of workers and others that cultural life has reached a dead-end by

limiting itself to natural science in its attempt to understand and find meaning in the world.

These experiences of injustice and cultural barrenness are what can make clear that economic life must transform its relationship to the labor and capacities that it uses.

There exists a significant contrast between these two threshold experiences. In the presentation of the threefold idea a need is said to arise out of a widely-felt inner dissatisfaction with current social conditions. If this dissatisfaction is tamped down, whether through entertainment, self-medication or countless other ways, then the social conditions can persist up to the point of total social dysfunction. Thus, while the time may be ripe for the implementation of the threefold idea, our dullness can keep us from recognizing this.

By contrast, as we enter a single, closed world economy the need for change is presented to us in the immediate external fragility of our social arrangements. The reckoning with the consequences of our uneconomic behavior will in this case not be postponed just because we manage to live in a state of blissful ignorance. The reckoning will happen whether in the form of economic and environmental collapse or wars or eventually one hopes in a positive way through seizing the opportunity to transform how we conduct our economic life.

These two threshold experiences are different but the threshold that is experienced is the same. Crossing it successfully in one way will eventually lead to crossing it successfully in the other way. If a region were able to transform itself out of great shared inner dissatisfaction with the social life, including its spiritual content, it would inevitably create the conditions for entering into world economy in a healthy way. Similarly, if people who are confronted by a closed, world economy learn to work towards economic health through allowing gift money to arise in the right amount, for instance, they will create the conditions required by a buoyant cultural life that provides spiritual sustenance to humanity.

So one way of crossing this threshold successfully may precede and lead to the other way. But having the two happen more or less simultaneously would be most desirable.

Perhaps a way of characterizing the tragedy of World War One is that a significant part of the world was in fact at a point when both ways could have happened simultaneously but the opportunity was squandered in destruction. A question we can pose for the present decade, therefore, is whether another such point may be at hand.

Informed Giving

Lorene Allen / Sebastopol, USA

In the ancient city of Aleppo, Syria, a siege has been going on for 8 months. The once beautiful city is now a pile of rubble, and bombs continue to fall upon the people. In a large room crowded with the wounded and dying, the one doctor assists with the Cesarean birth of a wounded woman. The doctor palpates the floppy form with vigorous movements. Many minutes stream into endless time. All those present are suspended with hearts and ears all listening for the outcome. From this moment, pervaded by intense hope, a whimper is heard! The entire room exhales in unison. Once more life steps through death lending a hand of trust to the weary.

The Economics Conference lends orientation to the confusing pictures of our present world. My involvement with the Economics Group of the Anthroposophical Society in America and the publications reporting on the worldwide work provide much needed sustenance to continue my practice of living in integrity, clarity and trust.

An essential source that has built my understanding of world economics and my place in it is when I hear economic history told while a pictorial representation unfolds. I experience myself in the image. I by-pass confusion and move into finding purpose in the future. I see my activity as part of the whole. I find the courage to act.

I imagine that this experience I have in my bones, could be replicated and, potentially, also inspire others to self-perception and action.

As a practical application of Rudolf Steiner's threefold ideas, I give or lend funds for others' initiatives. I recognize these actions as a means by which I consciously engage and give expression to what I have learned about associative economics.

If associative economics were fully visible in the world there would be hope, integrity in medicine, history, and in the rights life. There would be respect for the infinite variations of diversity. Conscientious education would be free for all. True prices on all products worldwide, backed by duty free trade would exist as a basis for a 'choir of cultures.' Money for capitalizing initiatives would be simplified based on financial literacy. There would be freedom of choice and active recognition that freedom is balanced with responsibility.

Threefold. Threshold

What are the impediments to the threefold social order in our times?

Topic discussion of the of the Economics Group of the Society in America, summarized by Kim Chotzen / Viroqua, USA and Meg Freeling / Columbus, USA.

Economics Group participants recently considered what the threefold social order means in our times, what might be the obstacles to its unfolding, and ideas to promote it becoming more influential.

I will not attribute these ideas to each individual who spoke but rather attempt to create a synthesis of the conversation that became possible because of the longstanding common background of Rudolf Steiner's *Economics Course* shared by those involved.

It was agreed that the best starting point to understand and to realize the threefold social order is through economics and bookkeeping. Often, explanations of the threefold nature of social life, as understood and articulated by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, can seem programmatic – as if something is to be implemented. Or worse, as an abstract party platform that invites another one in opposition, each of which can readily be justified and argued without resolution since neither is based on an objective necessity.

But from a practical standpoint, *Towards Social Renewal* already includes the main economic ideas. For example, the boundaries that stand outside of economic life are land, labor and capital. If 'threefolding' is approached from this starting point, there's a better chance of it not being heard as programmatic.

Of note is the difference between *Towards Social Renewal* and the *Economics Course*, especially in the ways Rudolf Steiner refers to the threshold. Per the *Economics Course*, the threshold was something humanity could then (1922) experience as an outer reality. The one world economy had become a fact. We could not trade with the moon!

In *Towards Social Renewal*, Steiner talks about an inner reality – the threshold humanity experienced when culture no longer sustained it and there was a loss of ground. This is reminiscent of the sense of lost ground experienced by the neophyte in the mysteries of Hibernia. And also could be a description of the experiences in today's world. The threefold idea points to those experiences and can bring orientation when ground is lost.

If human encounter should occur once in a thousand days, how would we love and adore one another; and preserve forever the remembrance of human warmth and liveliness! And now (over a year into this ordeal), when we meet one another, we still light the universe with our smiles.

Mary Adams / Harbor Springs, USA

When considering the objective necessity of treating land, labour and capital as the boundaries to economic life, and not as commodities, one place to re-assess this is to consider the economic arrangements linked to intellectual property rights – the (erroneous) idea that I own my ideas and therefore the capital that ensues from their unfolding. Double-entry bookkeeping shows quite objectively the error of this way of thinking. Three kinds of money in accounting make a straightforward bridge to the threefold social order and can lead to the realization that capital is not 'owned', much less preserved. The threefold social order can only get traction when humanity understands this along with the meaning and practice of dying money. It is plausible enough to consider that one does not have a 'corner on ideas', even if the concept that ideas come from the spirit is not taken up by everyone.

We also discussed the threefold process connected with the Christmas Conference: representing (taking initiative); 'listening' for the effect one is having; then adjusting accordingly. These three elements can be likened to Budget, Actuals, and Modifications in an accounting cycle. The associative element comes in most strongly with the closing entries and one needs to have a worldwide consciousness when assessing the effects of the activity. This brings to mind the 'Meeting' of the AE Guarantee Mark.

Our considerations led us to thoughts about the way Walter J Stein took up the task given to him by Daniel N Dunlop, (1933) of listing all the world resources and their economic implications, thus beginning with *facts* rather than politics to find world solutions. We were reminded of the exhibition "Keynes / Dunlop / Steiner – Architects of World Economy" (see *Associate!* June 2015) which demonstrated that real-world solutions to manage a one-world economy have existed within the last one hundred years.

What is being asked of us now to further the work of these visionaries? Even if, in the interim, those solutions were thwarted by the egotism of American-based structures – the IMF, WTO and World Bank? Similarly, the threefold social order was thwarted by the nationalism promoted by Woodrow Wilson, but then Rudolf Steiner, recognizing that a window had closed, took a new tack. Social renewal would need a different approach, he said, "a new language – and that is what I hope to give you in this Economics Course".¹⁷

We asked ourselves: What is the new, the next challenge, that takes us beyond the impossible? Which windows are still open? Which have closed and what new possibilities are perhaps only made visible by reviewing this history, seeing what has

been, what could have been and what is now there for us to do? History offers moments of opportunity and chances that pass away. It seems that the current focus on the accounting exercise is important to point the way to a new window (see endnote), beginning with *facts* not politics to find world solutions. We were reminded of the exhibition *Keynes / Dunlop / Steiner – Architects of World Economy*¹⁸ and the fact that real-world solutions to manage a one-world economy existed within the last one hundred years.

Note: Recently there have been several online meetings with groups of colleagues working to fine-tune the precise details of the accounting exercise we have been working on these past few years. The idea is to get this to a certain stage, then share it with everyone, then present it as a YouTube video to provide a basis for the content being developed in the associative financial literacy.com website.



Keeping up... Rudolf Steiner

"I have frequently said that it was like living through four centuries in as many years. Now if we had lived through several centuries we would expect many changes to have taken place, especially in the language. But people still speak in 1922 the language of 1914, unaware that the changes wrought by the war really were centuries long. This is the problem."

- *Economics*, op. cit. p. 255.

¹⁷ *Economics*, op. cit., p.38.

¹⁸ Folkestone, England 2015 and Carlow Ireland 2016.

Reflections...

...on Sacrifice

Meg Freeling / Columbus, USA

The Baptist as Sacrificer ("He must increase, I must decrease") and Facilitator (helping it happen) of the Entry of Christ into a Human Body in 30 AD.

More alone time provides more time for reflection and re-direction in the light of the events (non-events?) of 2020.

"Deep within the recesses of my being I hear the Word of Worlds, intent on self-disclosure, whispering, "Flood with My spiritual Light the goals thy labors keep in sight, and offer, thus, thyself through me." – Calendar of the Soul, December 8–14.

What are the goals my labors keep in sight?

- Set up a more dependable system for my own bookkeeping, so that I can keep current not only on my Income and Expense Statements, but also keep my Balance Sheet accurate and active and turn it into a Budget that reveals my aspirations.
- Find deeds to do that align with Rudolf Steiner's continuing presence and his ongoing striving to further the Anthroposophical Society as a center for awakening the human being's self-knowledge in the light of the New Mysteries.
- Align my practical life with the deepest purposes of my soul and spirit.

What light is flooding in now?

- Continue supporting the Economics Group in the U.S. and help it expand into its new purposes.
- Work with the "Rhythms Group" (Lorene Allen, Marguerite Doray and myself) that grew out of the 2020-21 Christmas Conference Celebration in Mexico to live into the rhythms of the Foundation Stone Meditation.
- Find ways to strengthen and support Fionn Meier in his commitment to Associative Financial Literacy through the new website and the related educational programs he is offering.¹⁹



Carravaggio's *Beheading of John the Baptist*

Just as St. John the Baptist used his death by beheading as an opportunity to strengthen St. John the Divine and all the other Disciples gathered in the Upper Room at Whitsun so that the Holy Spirit could find the needed readiness to receive His mighty Gifts, even so might we be readied through our spiritual attentiveness to become the "sacrificers" and "facilitators" of the Entry of the Christ through the new living structure of the Christmas Conference that is to become the transformed Anthroposophical Society now being asked for in these times.

...on the Threefold Social Life

Alejandro Urtizberea / San Gilles, Argentina

Resounding in my soul are many questions that I have heard in social spheres: What was Rudolf Steiner's idea about threefold society? What did he propose? What system should Waldorf schools and other institutions use?

Here is an image that reflects something in each of these questions, found in a story by the writer David F. Wallace:

"Somewhere in the oceans, two young fish are swimming, and they meet an old fish that greets them and asks them with a shout: How is the water?"

The two fish look at each other, and move away from the old man.

After a while they stop, and one asks the other: "What the hell is water?"

Rudolf Steiner, describes the social organism, like all ubiquitous truths. And, just as it happens to young fish, we find truths difficult to see and understand, even though we develop our existence, so to speak, in the 'amniotic fluid' of the social organism.

For 12 years, I attended a religious college, and upon entering that great structure of Roman architecture, I read an inscription that was between two columns. They were a few words

¹⁹ www.associative-financial-literacy.com

from the Gospel of John. My intention is to share with you my reflections on these words in light of the content of Rudolf Steiner's work, particularly from the point of view that concerns us today.

John 14: 6 "...I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life..."

Before the words: "I am the Way...", the image of walking, can arise, which displays the forces of the motor metabolic system. The force of faith drives, allowing the forces of the soul to unfold in such a way that harmony is established between the interior and the forces of the cosmos. In this way the Imagination appears as the form. A form that at some point was expressed in the Tablets of the Law, a form that refers to the presence of God the Father.

O Mask
I see you entering
My world
Hiding the fine translucence of human cheeks.
Your cold wind has settled in my soul
Deprived of the human light of a smile –
Inspiration for my words.
Today, I finally named my suffering.
I named you Mask.
I will confront you
With the light of my words
that you have made silent.
Today, you are Mask.
Tomorrow, you will take on another disguise.
My suffering will be the same though.
Therefore,
I will recognize you
And name you.
For the sake of our humanity –
Which is not yours!

Marguerite Doray / Montreal, Canada¹

Before the words: "I am the Life...", the image of the word, speaking, can arise. The forces of the rhythmic system deployed, which, impregnated with the language of the Gospels, speaking, manifests the forces of love, in such a way that love becomes substance. A substance of love poured out to the world, which exposes us to the presence of the Son.

Before the words: "I am the Truth...", the image of the forces of thought can arise. Through the neuro-sensory system, through unfolded thinking, I connect with that revealed truth, and hope arises in the soul. The thoughts have been transformed into radiant light. Radiant light like tongues of fire, which exposes us to the presence of the forces of the Holy Spirit.

John 14: 6 "... no-one comes to the Father except through Me."

Rudolf Steiner tells us when he talks about the contents of the New Mysteries that man, in order to think, takes forces from nature, but where the germinating forces left by Christ are not to be found. Man can only participate in the germinating forces of Christ through his will, that is, his actions, his initiatives.

The words of John may give us the strength to act in the world, overcoming the obstacles of lies, selfishness, illness and death. Thus in the future, through the forces of faith, love and hope, we will be able, as humanity, to give life to the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity.

Circulation Videos

chb

In September, as part of Folkestone's 5th Triennial, I organized three lectures, that were live-streamed and are now on YouTube. Two may be of interest – *The Circulation of Blood* with Dr Branko Furst and *The Circulation of Capital* by me. The third concerned town planning. The links are given below. Although the filming left something to be desired, this was beyond my control. The main aim was achieved, however, namely to place in the public domain some thoughts that explore how far one can go with ideas that, for all their anthroposophical roots, stand freely in modern culture. In grander words, to help people generally to understand life at the threshold.

Dr. Branko Furst (1:20:38):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjwsvJIX_Fw

Christopher Houghton Budd (1:22:37):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqJumwMIqb0>

Postscript

And all the while the bees hive on, together with Mauricio in Mendoza, Argentina, whose bees they are.

