



24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting / Economics Conference of the Goetheanum

# Towards 2033 / 2

Michaelmas through Advent 2025

***Internal document sent to all Economics Conference colleagues. Please, do not circulate it, therefore.***<sup>1</sup>

Dear Colleagues,

In this edition of *Towards*, we get a powerful glimpse of the possible legacy of the Economics Conference as experienced in the soul of its convenor of 24 years. Especially in light of the 'news' regarding Rudolf Steiner's intention to create a section for economics, it is very interesting to consider the role as placeholder for such economic research that the Economics Conference has played. And the karmic challenge of managing the processes involved in bringing to earth the necessary substance regarding economic life if it is to work on into the future. Especially, as this appears via those who have been able to find a home in the Conference. This includes the karma of being a section leader and the responsibility, as in an orchestral anecdote recently shared, 'to serve as the conductor, with knowledge of the individual players' skills and circumstances, on whose baton, not him, all musicians eyes are trained so that music from the whole orchestra is the assured result.'

This jointly-created substance, standing as it does on the ground of the Christmas Conference and the Economics Course and having been made known via the research held rigorously within the Economics Conference, can now, like a Michaelic sword, strike through the chaos of economic materialism. First and foremost, is the metamorphosis of the finances of the Anthroposophical Society, which takes its cues from the Circle of Treasurers and the form of the Goetheanum Fund Worldwide. In this context, there is mention of the upcoming Treasurers Research Meeting as well as an update on Branch research.

One hopes for coherence of the content as it takes on individual expression amongst colleagues, especially within the Anthroposophical Movement and that this will be recognized by the good gods as another step towards the spiritualization of earthly intelligence. As Sergei Prokofieff relates in this quote: (provided by Meg Freeling): "...had it not been possible to spiritualize human intelligence on the Earth to a definite degree, the Christmas Conference would not have been possible."<sup>2</sup>

As an echo to such challenges, there is the section in which various colleagues contribute their responses

to the question: *What does it mean to be a representant in economic life.*" Several describe their strivings to bringing about a growing consciousness of the essential nature of associative financial literacy education. These 'heroes and heroines' continue to forge paths around the world, making this work ever more visible and accessible. These endeavors seem ready to be taken up increasingly by others, a possibility that can only be strengthened the more coherently we work, this being evidence in the normal world of a school of thought.

But this one is sounding a new tone, one that is already echoing in the field of agriculture. There is a brief report concerning collaboration with the Agriculture Section co-leader, Eduardo Rincon, leading, unexpectedly, to the home of Daniel Dunlop's Summer School at Penmenmaer. One wonders, what seeds were planted there? And will we gather there next year to see their tender shoots?

This edition is rounded off beautifully with Andrew Wolpert's piece on the relevance of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, which reflects on its modern relevance depicting the all-too-common lower human tendencies when everyone, at precisely this moment in history, has the opportunity to transform them in the pursuit of the gods' highest aims for human life on earth: not remonstrating, but demonstrating that matter can be spiritualized. Or, in money matters, as Marc Desaulles said in 2015 in Montreal, "Money is realized spirit, and can stay that way, keep that quality, as long as it is entrusted to spirit in others."

With warmest Michaelmas greetings to all,

*Kim Chotzen*

<sup>1</sup> *Front page image:* Unknown and dating from 1467, a Michael relief in the Sankt Severi Church in Erfurt, Germany. The little figure on Michael's arm is the soul of the deceased. A fitting emblem as we head out of Michaelmas towards All Souls' Day.

<sup>2</sup> *Rudolf Steiner and the Founding of the New Mysteries*, 1986. pp 329 - 334

## From the Convenor's Desk

chb

*Emeritus beckons*

I wrote in the previous issue about the endowment destiny of the Economics Section until now. How long this will last is hard to tell – but let's say by Michaelmas 2033, latest. That's eight Michaelmasses from now. Much can happen in that time, of course, and much of that will depend on the future shape, nature and leadership of the Social Sciences Section. It will also depend on what the future holds for the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum, meaning on how its convening evolves, on what colleagues do, and especially on whether they act concertedly or otherwise.

For my part as convenor to date, although I expect to 'die at my desk', so to speak, rather than retire, I am planning gradually to become emeritus – ceding the role without causing a vacuum. But also not designing or prescribing whatever follows, despite my at times quite definite views! I am firmly of the view that leading or convening section activity is a karmic affair. Even if one goes through the abstractions and acrobatics of so-called democratic procedures – many of them in fact a denial of ethical individualism – one arrives at the person to whom one entrusts that role, at which point that person's karma (and karmic relationships) takes to the stage and grasps the wheel, setting the scene and the direction – but out of a catholic consciousness, aware of what is going on all around. It is then for him or her<sup>3</sup> to make of a section what he or she will.

The validity, effectiveness and achievement of a section then depends on whether its leader or convenor is an antenna for that section's field in general, meaning public, social life. However, sections do not have to exist; they are not university departments. They do not exist per se but only if there is someone whose karma they provide a clothing for.

*Economics, threefolding and the Anglo-Saxon story. Again!*

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to begin my emeritus phase by sharing with everyone thoughts I have recently been discussing with only some of you. I do so because, however personal to me they may seem, I think in fact this is not the case. No one has to assent to them. Whether they resonate in one's soul depends on what one's karma already entails. It is no infringement on my part to share what lies on my heart. On the contrary, I feel it a duty to do so, the dereliction of which is not for me an option. (I already took this position when I introduced the *Current Convenor's Considerations*<sup>4</sup> on our website, enabling me to express my views clearly but without them thereby being the views of

my colleagues – a stance echoed in the *Hope Springs Eternal* website<sup>5</sup>.)

A correspondent in Rome, Jonathan Townsend, recently asked me: '...in the German edition of Steiner's economics lectures (lecture 10), Rudolf Steiner mentions his book 'Die Kernpunkt der sozialen Fragen' several times. Yet in your edition this is omitted entirely, not even a footnote. I am wondering what the reasoning was so I can better understand.'

My reason was that at the time I was working with a colleague, Gaudenz Assenza, who was completing his doctorate at Harvard. He wrote *Beyond the Market*<sup>6</sup> and has for many years now been a professor of economics in the Czech Republic. The main reason for the reworking was to produce a book by Steiner on economics only. For this reason, I left out such a mention, as also things Steiner said about the anthroposophical movement and anything on World War I or heading toward commentary on brotherhoods. The intended audience, right down to the book cover and choosing the title 'Economics', was the Anglo-Saxon economics community and its path of evolution, especially in the field of finance – a theme touched on elsewhere in this issue.

In my judgement, then and ever since, Steiner's work gets no interest unless it matches what I call the 'Marshallian detachment',<sup>7</sup> the need for economics to separate itself off from the social sciences generally and what in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was called 'political economy', in order (in my not generally held view) to rejoin at a later stage. As karma would have it, this was not possible before 2008, and even now relies on economics becoming grounded on accounting, something it can only do via associative financial literacy. Not until then can we embark on an economic historical version of Barfield's 'final participation'.<sup>8</sup>

In retrospect, maybe I should have footnoted my redaction, but I stand by it. Behind my decision was my long-held view concerning the destiny of the cousin peoples of England and Germany, the failure of both our missions, and the continuing role of England in 'controlling' Central European destiny. Although now obfuscated by the European Union project and hindered by those who believe that Britain is *not* part of Europe, these concerns remain and are crucial to solving the Anglo-German relationship, which continues to be the key European challenge. More so, I suggest than the 'classic' focus on Franco-German relations. The need is paramount for everyone, both the English and Germans (meaning individuals not peoples) to stand in his or her sovereignty, without which the folk souls cannot come into their right relationships. The English, in this case, have to learn to live without their world hegemony via language, economics and finance; the Germans have to recover national confidence.

<sup>3</sup> But not they in my view!

<sup>4</sup> <https://economics.goetheanum.org/research/convenor-considerations>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hopespringseternal.world/about/>

<sup>6</sup> An English treatment of Udo Hermannstorfer's work in Stuttgart. *Search aebookstore.com*.

<sup>7</sup> See *Associate!*, September 2022, p. 5, [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> For the English-speaking world, especially at a scholarly level and especially in the US, one should not overlook the bridging role Owen Barfield plays regarding anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner. Similar can be said of Friedrich Hiebel, a former Vorstand member.

Economics apart, however, given all the 19<sup>th</sup> century background of Caspar Hauser, Bismarck, Marx and so on, the resulting dropping of both their missions was an outer effect of being at the threshold and failing to understand this event in its economic guise. For precisely this problem and reason, while one may speak in terms of 'elites', 'celebrities' or 'authorities', these are spectral allusions that evidence humanity not able to stand clearly at the threshold, accessing its (meaning, our) tasks and forces from the other side. In economic and financial terms, this is why I focus on capitalising initiative. It is a direct and universally economic way of freely funding spiritual life: i.e. a signal feature of a one-world economy rather than national economy. Indeed, each country now has to face whatever challenges stand in the way of this in its own rights life and general socio-historical context.

*Brotherhoods and the financing of the Anthroposophical Society*

But there is a further aspect: I think the threefold project 'failed' not so much because of internal challenges, but because the 'brotherhoods' opposed it. 28 June 1914 saw the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the spark event of World War I. Austro-Hungary, on which Steiner modelled the threefold story, was near the end of Franz Joseph's 60 year reign (he died in 1916). No way was Central Europe going to have ascendancy if that meant Britain (and then the US) losing their hegemony. Against this, very few could prevail, least of all in terms of outer social change.

This is also the background to why I think the threefold order now has to be discovered via a detached economics, via the idea of a one-world associative economy. One cannot enter into the meaning of true price, capitalised initiative, land, labour and capital not as commodities, three kinds of money, and all the rest of it, unless one has an active sense of how social life is threefold, however faltering or experimental one's understanding and expression of that may be. One can, of course, start with the *idea* of threefolding, but in my experience it needs to be an *assumption* at the base of what oneself actually does, with its recognition and enactment as the foundation, as best one can, of one's own behaviour. Since the threefold social order cannot exist or mean anything if economic life is not one-world and associative, one can as effectively begin the process of its realisation reversedly, backwards as it were.

In terms of exoteric/esoteric evolution, the larger background story concerns the waning of Masonic

and other influences – the culmination at the time of World War I of their ages-long<sup>9</sup> task concerning the structuring of both outer and inner life. This can only be superseded, however, by the Anthroposophical Society as carrier of the School of Spiritual Science, whose three classes (and much more) arose and exist to enable us to throw off the yoke of out-dated spirituality in inner and outer affairs.<sup>10</sup>

Outwardly, this is about what I regard as the (unfinished) task of the Anglo-Saxons, namely, having led humanity into the vale of tears of economic materialism, it is incumbent upon them also to lead us out. Coming out of this baleful valley means above all no longer controlling Germany's – and thereby Central Europe's – destiny, something that I like to imagine became possible when my paper on 'Triple Governance'<sup>11</sup> was published by the Mont Pelegrin Society.<sup>12</sup>

This is not a story many people know about or are interested in, but it is the sole reason why I have spent 50 years or more concerned with the finances of the Society/School and remain so concerned both through my work with the Anthroposophical Society's treasurers and as a board member of the Goetheanum Fund Worldwide. I not only see this commitment as central to my contribution to the unfinished task of the Anglo-Saxons, I also regard the financing of the Anthroposophical Society as the praxis for a one-world economy and, through that, threefold society.

There is another reason why I will not let go my commitment to the Christmas Conference, and all that implies. Because I am an Anglo-Saxon, I am party to those whose destiny it is to lead us out of the vale of tears. This may be resisted by those, unfortunately many, anthroposophists who hold 'the West' askance; and yet, while understandable, such resistance is historically misjudged. This is why

I have always said there needs to be an English person (not an American) on the Vorstand, a prospect that to this day remains shunned.

These themes belong to deep-running rivers, of course. For any errors or untoward omissions on my part, I hope Steiner will forgive me. However, I also think he understands.

**Sea of Courage**  
*a song by Meg Freeling*

Now I'm awake in a sea  
of courage

Boundless and joyful and  
free

Borne on the wings of  
the wisest warmth

I now stand and sing.

<sup>9</sup> See *The Temple Legend*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 2014. GA93.

<sup>10</sup> See 'Tasks, Seeds and Qualities' in *The Deed of Rudolf Steiner*. Search aebookstore.com.

<sup>11</sup> [https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Articles\\_and\\_Papers/EC\\_Paper\\_2020\\_CHB\\_Triple\\_Governance\\_en.pdf](https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Articles_and_Papers/EC_Paper_2020_CHB_Triple_Governance_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> The Mont Pelerin Society was founded in 1944 by Friedrich von Hayek and others in the Mont Pelerin Hotel overlooking Nestlé's headquarters near Montreux, Switzerland. One can imagine a very different Pilgrim's Mountain Hotel also nestled in Switzerland, this one in Dornach.

*Economics Conference*  
*Section for Social Sciences*  
**Economics and Economic History**

**Concerning the as yet unfounded Economics Section**

**A Brief History of the Social Sciences Section**  
*Sylvain Coiplet / Berlin, Germany*

*Sylvain, founder of the Institute for Social Threefolding in Berlin, recently wrote this history of the Social Sciences Section (translated by CHB). This is good as far as it goes, but as a main participant in that section ever since its restart in the mid 1970s, both in Britain and at the Goetheanum, I find it is not sufficiently catholic or informed. The account is as regards Germany only, and from the point of view of someone who was not at the Goetheanum events. It also makes no reference to the work and history of the Social Sciences Section in Britain or in North America. I have addressed this problem by a combination of square-bracketed remarks in the text or footnotes. – chb.*

As early as December 1923, in connection with the founding of the General Anthroposophical Society, Rudolf Steiner intended to establish a Section for Economics within the School of Spiritual Science under the leadership of Guenther Wachsmuth (see end comments). This did not happen, however, as Wachsmuth preferred to head a Natural Sciences Section instead. Even so, Rudolf Steiner granted him this position despite his lack of mathematical training.<sup>13</sup> Until then, Wachsmuth had proven himself as treasurer, which makes Rudolf Steiner's proposal all the more understandable. The initiative for a Section for Social Sciences did not originate with Rudolf Steiner, therefore.

[Such a section] would have to cover a wide variety of disciplines – at least according to today's understanding. However, after the abandonment of the Threefolding Movement in 1922, Rudolf Steiner placed the emphasis on a renewal of economics with the *Economics Course*. It was not until March 1930, at the instigation of the lawyer Roman Boos that the 'Social Science Association at the Goetheanum' was founded, as a replacement for the leadership of a Section for Social Sciences at the Goetheanum, which he had desired but which the Executive Board had rejected.<sup>14</sup> Within this framework, Roman Boos organized several social science conferences, [including] an economics conference in May 1933.<sup>15</sup> It was only after Roman Boos's death in 1952 that the first meeting of the 'Social Science at the Goetheanum' working group took place in July 1954,

at the initiative of Hugo Reimann. This group was active until June 1961.<sup>16</sup> During the Christmas Conference of 1961, the Executive Board at the Goetheanum finally decided to establish a Section for Social Sciences and asked Kurt Franz David to take over the leadership of this section starting December 31, 1961.<sup>17</sup> In February 1965, in view of his excessive demands from other tasks, David asked to be released from his responsibility for the Social Science Section, at which point the leadership was transferred to Herbert Witzmann.

In May 1970, there was a conflict between Herbert Witzmann and the Vorstand at the Goetheanum.<sup>18</sup> The latter took the Section for Social Science back into its hands. Subsequently, little took place until Manfred Schmidt-Brabant was appointed leader in March 1975. The same thing soon happened with him as before with Kurt Franz David and [again] later with Paul Mackay: he was consumed by other tasks in such a way that the Section was neglected.<sup>19</sup> Even so, most of the conferences [at the Goetheanum] took place in Schmidt-Brabant's time.

When it became clear that, contrary to previous expectations, no research activities would take place in Dornach, Dietrich Spitta<sup>20</sup> founded the 'Social Science Research Society' together with Stefan Leber in Stuttgart in 1981. From there [, that is, in Germany,] from 1986 to 2000, the 'Social Science Forum' series was published, which, using the medium of individual topics, gave an overview of the various currents of the threefold movement. Since then, the Institute for Social Threefolding has been doing this task.

[In 1996,] the successor to Manfred Schmidt-Brabant, Paul Mackay, renamed the section the 'Section for Social Sciences', adding an 's'. As a former banker, he was particularly interested in economics. Accordingly, in 2002 [at the suggestion of Christopher Houghton Budd at the Kimberton threefold conference in October 2001] the 'Economics Conference' [was inaugurated] within this section.<sup>21</sup> Otherwise the section was represented by Ulrich Rösch. Mackay's successor, Gerald Häfner, brought new activity and developed an intensive lecture work around the world. His original focus, the question of direct democracy, was expanded in interaction with Armin Steuernagel and threefolding. (Thankfully, however, he avoided the topic of the unconditional basic income which he looked favourably on.)

*Comments (repeated from the previous issue of Towards)*

In retrospect, Guenther Wachsmuth represents the facts as if it were about a Social Science Section and this in addition to the scientific section. I think this

<sup>13</sup> See p.5.

<sup>14</sup> <https://dokumentation.kulturimpuls.org/ereignisse/8256>

<sup>15</sup>

<https://dokumentation.kulturimpuls.org/institutionen/9378>

<sup>16</sup> Thirty papers on this from Dietrich Spitta's estate are held in the Institute for Social Threefolding in Berlin. The last date June 1981.

<sup>17</sup> On the History of the Social Sciences Section and the Ruspe Circle. Dietrich Spitta.

<https://triarticulation.fr/IH/SWS/GeschichteSpitta.html>

<sup>18</sup> On the ostensible grounds that Witzmann would not move to Dornach, his membership in the Vorstand was placed 'in abeyance' in 1974. – CHB.

<sup>19</sup> Yes with Paul, by his own admission; but not so with Manfred in my direct experience. – CHB.

<sup>20</sup> With whom I had close links. He also had a 'good' comprehension of the Christmas Conference. – CHB.

<sup>21</sup> Renamed the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum in October 2009 with Paul's agreement in his office. – CHB.

is not credible. I stick to the corresponding diary entry of his colleague Albert Steffen:

'On December 16<sup>th</sup> at Villa Hansi (Dr. Wegman, Dr. Wachsmuth, and me). Dr. Steiner reads the statutes and then says how he envisions the board. He: President. Marie Steiner and me: Vice Presidents. Dr. Wegman: Secretary. Wachsmuth: Cashier. (Wachsmuth suggests Treasurer, to which Dr. Steiner laughingly replies: "The name doesn't matter.") Then, leaders of the individual departments. Dr. Steiner: the entire High School. Me: *belles lettres*. Wachsmuth: economics. He'd prefer natural sciences. But Dr. Steiner says it's a shame he's not a mathematician.'

– Albert Steffens's *Tagebucheintragung*. GA 259, pp. 727-728.

### Is there a New Elephant in the Room? chb

As recounted above, the history of the Social Sciences Section leads me to think there is a new elephant in the room, namely, that the Social Sciences Section is and always has been a kind of delaying phenomenon – even, strictly speaking, an imposter – as far as the science and discipline of economics is concerned. As if hanging on to the political dimension of 'political economy', when it is this aspect that economics specially distanced itself from. A similar story attends the problem that what in English is called 'world economy' is in German called 'national economy'. All of which would explain why the Social Sciences Section is somewhat weak and has not really worked. It could only ever have worked if it had made economics its main concern. But that means, inter alia, following in the footsteps of Dunlop, so to speak, embracing, then leading us out of the Marshallian Detachment,<sup>22</sup> while allowing the power of lodges to atrophy – steps in human evolution that only spiritual science can help us accomplish.

*When seen from within England and through my eyes, at least, if one looks carefully, this is what the Economics Conference has always had as its task. The economics course and the three Oxford lectures are a kind of watershed in this regard in that they took place when outwardly the threefold movement had proved ineffective in Central Europe, not just because of its internal inconsistencies, but because of the stop put on it by 'the West'. That karma of untruthfulness has not yet ended. Nor is it an infection against which the anthroposophical movement has proved itself immune.*

One can see in the 1922 West-East Congress, for example, how Rudolf Steiner draws attention to this, and the emphasis he places on the relationship between Europe and America – see following section. In contrast to this, there is, of course, the so-called 'special relationship' between Britain and America. But one should not be beguiled and then lulled by this into overlooking how this occludes the deeper

Anglo-Saxon story, which lives on quietly in the continued existence, presence and effect of pound sterling, for example, and the scarcely understood role of Britain's constitutional monarchy. Rather than explore the benign aspect of this thread of history, the 'special relationship' fosters its shadow by allowing the impression to be had that the US is 'fautif' and the originator of today's many ills (including a president like Trump). But this is surely a convenient fable that also keeps attention away from what could have happened (and could still?) had the link between Rudolf Steiner and Daniel Dunlop been followed, together with Steiner's inner translocation to Druidic, Arthurian and Hibernian realms. To repeat, brotherhoods and the 'lodgy' soul behaviour they rely on have to be outgrown, but this will never be possible without an incarnate Economics Section in the School of Spiritual Science.

#### Functions of the General Secretary

*The minutes of the ASGB Council Meeting, Sept. 4th, 1923, record Rudolf Steiner as having given 'the following points of advice and direction:*

The Secretary General as the responsible Chairman of the Council, and acting in agreement with the Council, should look after the inner and outer affairs of the Society. Especially should he represent the Society to the outside world. The Secretary as his assistant should be responsible more especially for internal management... The Secretary General is the Convener of the Council.'

What, one wonders, would he have said about the treasurers?

### America and Europe chb

The idea of this section is to challenge the notion of 'North America'. One can speak of the Western hemisphere without controversy (as long as one does not ask how it came into existence!) and one can describe that area as the Americas, and hence differentiate north, south, central, etc. But even there, 'the Americas' is a European overlay and needs to be used fully mindful of the history and karma of that hemisphere's prior inhabitants. If one allows, as Jefferson hoped for, that the prior and subsequent peoples on that continent would somehow amalgamate, then the countries now there, including the grafting of European traditions on to what was there before, suggests also that modern day countries can remain several, as they are, yet work together, without inventing or submitting to the supranational dimension of North America. For this, surely, invokes a particular level and kind of being which, like that animating the European Union, ought not to be given oxygen. Just as one can see how such a being hovers in the background of Asia, where its characteristic is spiritual and individual subjugation (witness communist China and North Korea), and just as the EU is a vehicle for rights life domination, so North America is the home of an

<sup>22</sup> See earlier footnote.

economic being that sees, and therefore admits to, only what can be bought and sold – be it groceries or Greenland. The question is: What 'should' eventuate in regard to America and Europe? This, however, is a complex topic about which we can do no more than lift the lid.

Though comprehensive in scope, our treatment can only be indicative – pointing to a topic that warrants much more consideration. It begins with some seminal comments made by Rudolf Steiner at the June 1922 West-East Congress in Vienna (attended by some 2,000 people) and held a few weeks before his course on economics, to be followed by the Oxford lectures on threefold society. We mention this because of the allusion it makes to Rudolf Steiner's moving westwards, fully aware that World War 1 and the Treaty of Versailles had dealt a profound blow to 'the native hope of Central Europeans,' that they hold the balance between East and West. At the end of the lecture he clearly states:

'...Central Europe itself forsook the paths it had been following. They need to be rediscovered... [by being clear about] what we need to abandon as decayed [so that] new life can blossom out of the ruins.'<sup>23</sup>

In greater depth, that lecture describes what was originally bestowed on us from out of the East (*ex oriente lux*), but how now to be wrung out of the west (*ex occidente forma*), just as it. Instead of educating the will out of the legacy of the East we need to educate it out of itself because it is 'in the West [where] the economic element first emancipates itself in human thinking.'<sup>24</sup>

'We<sup>25</sup> need to find '[our] own America ... the instinctive direction of humanity towards the will [that is] the ground on which Europe must reach an understanding with America, if a worldwide rapprochement is to come about... And precisely from a rapprochement of this kind we shall be able to ... reach the spiritual element of man.'<sup>26</sup>

'Only if we as Western men show that we are able, out of what we apprehend within ourselves, to summon up something spiritual and to counter the Oriental spirit, which today is in a state of decadence, with a European-American spirit, will a world economy and a world of commerce, such as exists only externally today, be possible, in a framework of genuine confidence between men.'<sup>27</sup>

These observations provide important context for how this 'moving westwards' actually occurred, in the

<sup>23</sup> *The Tension between East and West*, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1963, p. 162-3. Note: The English title reverses the German West-East.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>25</sup> Not just Central Europeans, because Steiner is speaking of the world and of humanity as a whole, so really anyone standing on the ground of the Consciousness Soul – Ed.

<sup>26</sup> *The Tension between East and West*, op. cit., p. 160.

sense of the St Gallen story, which has several layers. Firstly, according to hagiographic and monastic tradition, St Gall (c.550 – c.645) was a disciple and one of the traditional twelve companions of Columbanus on his mission from Ireland to the continent. However, he may have originally come from the border region between Lorraine and Alemannia and only met Columbanus at the monastery of Luxeuil in the Vosges. The Abbey of Saint Gall in the city of Saint Gallen, Switzerland was built upon his original hermitage.

Secondly, St Gallen University is known as the Chicago School of Switzerland – in terms of which paradigm it is considered one of the best business schools in that country.<sup>28</sup>

Thirdly, and of greatest interest to the anthroposophical movement, that is where the young man came from that Steiner gave the adjacent 'Verse for America' to, who then took it to New York. Hence, Spring Valley, where, as it happens there will be a moment of touching base with the America-Europe story on 6-

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

8 October, where a twin event will take further our research into the financing of the Anthroposophical Society and evening talks will rerun, as it were, the story of threefolding as it 'made land' in the US. (See details on p.10.)

### Columbia and Doveland kc

Continuing a discussion that has been alive among some Economics Conference colleagues in the US for over 20 years now since we first began looking at it in Columbus, Ohio, at the annual Economics Conference meeting in L'Aubier in September 2010, a conversation took place with Marc Desaulles, which these notes summarise.

In 1923, a young man by the name of Reinhard Mueller, age 17 or 18, was going to the US to start a branch of his father's lace business. His father lived in St. Gallen in Switzerland. The younger Mueller was a bit afraid about going into the military and wanted to go to America to avoid it. Steiner asked him, "Are you Swiss?" "Yes." "Well, then, of course you will have to come back to do your service in Switzerland!"

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 162.

<sup>28</sup> Strange to relate, my book, *Finance at the Threshold*, was in part commissioned by colleagues there as part a series to counter St Gallen's reputation for neo-liberalism. Interestingly also, Fionn Meier recently gave two lectures in St. Gallen about 'Money and Accounting' with the local branch full both evenings. – CHB.

When Ralph Courtney, a Paris-based American journalist for the *New York Herald Tribune* who had often visited Steiner in Dornach, 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 is needed there to collaborate with spiritual beings.

Courtney was a friend of Charlotte Parker and together with others, they founded the Threefold Group at Spring Valley. The verse was not meant to be used as a 'threefold' verse but became linked to that work.

St. Gallen is named after Gall, who was one of the Hibernian monks who accompanied Colombane to tell the Pope that the Europeans must forget about what became known as America. They must not know about its existence in order that the birth of the Consciousness Soul, with its requisite encounter with materialism, not be derailed through the powerful forces found there because of the north-south mountains. Colombane received authority from the Pope to erase the names of this 'American' continent and all traces of it, so that in three generations no one remembered it was there. European souls were too vulnerable to the forces of materialism coming from there, so the West was hidden from the consciousness of humanity in 500-600 AD.

### North American Postscript

chb

The short account given above is amply corroborated by Virginia Sease in her recent article in the American Society's journal, *Being Human*, May 2025. There she gives details of how the verse can be used and also includes mention of the lecture Steiner gave in St Gallen on 16 November 1917, at the time of US entry into World War 1 and the reception in Paris of Woodrow Wilson as Europe's saviour. Virginia Sease describes meeting the aged Reinard Mueller 70 years later (1987).

There are several versions of the verse for America. At the recent Easter Spring Valley treasurers research gathering we used the one chosen here by Marc Desaulles, which seems more spiritual than soulful, more concrete than hopeful.

Against this background, the next two articles are written respectively by a Swiss man and an Englishman. The wrong way round, or further evidence perhaps of the dislocation of history in our times? And yet, dislocated it is, along with karma, requiring also discretion in research when 'naming' the themes addressed here. An important clue comes at the end of lecture 2 in *The Mission of Folk Souls*,<sup>29</sup> a lecture that describes the hugely complex weaving of the hierarchies as this impacts on humanity, and especially the 'law of deferment', the holding back or not advancing, the abnormal development of spiritual beings. Even so, to this interweaving which entails both cooperation and competition, we owe language

Life, liberty and the pursuit of  
happiness...

becomes

Liberty, responsibility  
and the pursuit of truthfulness

and nationhood, our progress and our hindrances. It is in this context that Steiner makes the enigmatic comment: '... a study of the North American people shows a people who, for the time being, are under an abnormal Spirit of Personality', i.e. a delayed Arche.

### In the Land of Freedom

Marc Desaulles / Neuchatel, Switzerland

On the occasion of publishing his study on 'The Chymical Wedding' in Berlin 1917, Rudolf Steiner spoke as follows:

'In the year 1613 Johann Valentin Andrae wrote *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*... [he] wrote other works in which he expresses the thoughts and feelings of his time. One of his books has as its subtitle: 'To the Princes and Heads of States'... He had in mind a great spiritual movement and had given much thought and preparation to its realization. Two outstanding events were in preparation at that time: the movement Valentin Andrae wanted, and the Thirty Years' War, lasting from 1618 to 1648. The events that led to the Thirty Years' War made impossible the movement which Johann Valentin Andrae wanted to bring about... Today we again find ourselves within two streams, two possibilities, which must of necessity affect one another. On the one hand, there is Anthroposophy with the impulse to further human evolution; on the other hand, there is all that which has brought about events similar in nature to those that caused the Thirty Years' War. It depends upon mankind whether once again what ought to happen is prevented from happening.'<sup>30</sup>

What is the situation today? The good news is that anthroposophy has not been silenced! Through thousands of achievements, it has permeated culture in all four corners of the world. And yet the opposition expressed above is still there. The spirit of western materialism sets the tone more than ever, and global affairs are dominated by the United States of America.

What should be done? What is missing? Let's take a closer look...

Perhaps the trait that best characterises the United States of America is a spirit of freedom, a feeling that anything is possible.

<sup>29</sup> *Mission of Folk-Souls / Rudolf Steiner, 1910, Oslo.*

<sup>30</sup> *The Karma of Materialism. GA 176, 25 September 1917, Berlin.*

But what is freedom without truthfulness? It is the pursuit of happiness with the illusion of life that comes with it, a life that loses sight of what is essential and floods the entire world with a culture that distorts our relationship with images (cinema), with sound (music) and with human interaction (social media). If in addition truth were introduced alongside the celebration of freedom, this would provide an unexpected source of cultural renewal for the whole of civilisation. A formidable challenge, to be sure, but one in reach of each and every one of us!

For what is freedom without responsibility? It is the attitude of those entrepreneurs for whom all that matters is making money – the very ethos and fabric of today's economy! So, here the challenge takes on yet another dimension: the need to create social and legal structures that make room for freedom while at the same time calling for responsibility.

Such forms of ownership are possible, but they are not given by existing law. They must be willed and their statutes shaped to allow, on the one hand, the free initiative of the entrepreneur and, on the other, free recognition of this by shareholders stilling their power.

A broader sense of responsibility will then emerge, a responsibility born of committed, not just errant, freedom. Another unprecedented challenge and possibility that would change our entire perspective on economic life, both how we understand it and how we behave in respect to it.

For this, all that is lacking is the authenticity and commitment of the Rosicrucian impulse. Just imagine if, in the land of freedom, this truthfulness and responsibility could be added!



### Ideas about Europe

Christopher Houghton Budd / Folkestone, GB

Readers of this journal will be familiar with the name of Denis de Rougemont (1906–1985), a Swiss social

commentator (to say the least about him!) whose contributions to an understanding of Europe and the nature and virtues of federalism are well known.<sup>31</sup> This article is based on an important anthology published in 1966<sup>32</sup> which brings together practically everything anyone has said on the subject from the mists of ancient times up until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> The anthology is punctuated by de Rougemont's own brief remarks, through which one can glimpse how he himself views things. It is these that this article in turn comments on.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.aubier.ch/fr/l-attitude-federaliste.html>

<sup>32</sup> *The Idea of Europe*, Macmillan 1966.

<sup>33</sup> 1966 to be precise, for the book stops short at the inauguration of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA),

The first thing an Englishman notices is the entire absence of Britain, including europhile Scotland, from de Rougemont's descriptions of Europe – an incongruous hopping over of her as if she does not exist between continental Europe (that 'promontory of Asia') and the future America where the old world is to be reborn. To be sure, albeit alongside dozens of commentators from the Continent, many of them 'convinced Catholics', de Rougemont cites three who are English – Christopher Dawson, Arnold Toynbee and T S Eliot. However, all three are also serious Catholics, and behind Toynbee can be found Carroll Quigley and The Round Table.

Thereby hangs an important tale: seeming to aver Thomas Mann and others' wish for restoration of 'the rigorous disciplines and ... immutability of Catholicism' (347), de Rougemont's image of Europe defaults to deep Catholicism, the home of many who still seek Christ outside in 'Christendom', no matter how modern and ecumenical their version of that ancient story is. It is clear that, as he journeys through the history of Europe, de Rougemont makes constant background allusion to the Church, meaning the Europe-wide faith that held all souls together in the Middle Ages.

When he steps into the modern era, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, he details many changes, including the departure from faith, the rise of individualism, the fascination with science, and the sociologies of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Proudhon and many others. But what he leaves out of account is the emancipation of economic life from spiritual and rights life. Nor does he allude to anything like the Consciousness Soul, the emergence of which from a spiritual scientific view explains all modern phenomena.

This is not surprising, however, given that, despite surveying every commentator of note during the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he makes no mention, not even glancing, of Rudolf Steiner. And so, also, no mention of the threefold social order – the only sociological conception, however, that posits a free spiritual life and so provides escape from a default to Deep Catholicism. By this I mean falling into the arms of a pope, rather than finding St Peter in oneself; Deep Catholicism as that place which awaits anyone who describes life at the threshold with ever greater detail but without stepping on to the ground of spiritual science and anthroposophy.

For the same reason, de Rougemont gives voice to the idea of Europe lost between an America that calls her forward and a Russia that would pull her back. But he makes no mention of how such processes are manipulated by unseen workings emanating from 'London' and operative as long as sterling remains a serious currency in the world. He takes recent history on face value, as if the events that characterise it are untouched by what Rudolf Steiner describes in *The Karma of Untruthfulness*, for example.

of which both the UK and Switzerland were founder-members, and Switzerland still is, but onto which landscape de Rougemont does not open a window.

In this, de Rougemont omits a key consideration, namely, the role of Anglo-Saxon culture in displacing the Pope as a reference for the modern soul. So it is (or so it seems to me) that de Rougemont's image of Europe – growing out of the conference of the six member states of the European Coal and Steel Community in Venice on 29 and 30 May 1956 and since metamorphosed into the European Union (to which neither Switzerland nor Britain belong) – remains deeply Catholic, unable to step into the Consciousness Soul age.

Indeed, he thinks in terms of *Christendom* and *Germanentum*, the Pope and Charlemagne, spiritual and temporal life in a kind of partnership or division of labour, without any corresponding conception of economic life post 14<sup>th</sup> century. And so he does not see how in Europe the threefold order is hidden behind a spiritual life occupied by the Church, a rights life organised as the fiefdom of the Holy Roman Empire in its latest iteration, and an economic life increasingly under the thumb of Anglo-Americanism.

He cannot see, therefore, how the end game of a United States of Europe – that 'democratised substitute for an authority above the Nations' (254) with a correspondingly supranational governance – arises not only instead of but as a blockage to the threefold order. In its detail, the blockage takes the form of individualism backgrounded by the Holy Trinity as a religious conception. Far from the vision of Maria Schindler, for example, who sees Europe as a rehearsal for humanity as a whole,<sup>34</sup> de Rougemont's Europe (which is not the same as his federalism) cannot be true Europe, the world's Europe; *les peuples du noyau*. And especially not while it operates through a single non-national, yet non-global currency with its associated central bank remote from its polity.

Likewise, de Rougemont has no conception of the Gabrielic age in which the Consciousness Soul came to birth, but during which the tenacious allure of blood, nationhood, and origin was also very strong. Nor of the superseding Michael period of world economy and cosmopolitanism, with its eye on the future and its independence from blood (entailing the corresponding step from religiosity to spiritual science). Or the crossing of the threshold by humanity as whole – the hidden cause of all the upheavals of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, illustrated most keenly by the many events of 1848, in which he nevertheless places much historical store.

Unaware of Rudolf Steiner's threefold social conception, he is also unable to see how it grew out of the realities of the Austro-Hungarian empire when made generic and cast over the world as a whole. Taken in its entirety and seen in practical terms, a free spiritual life, a severalty of countries, and a single global economy are anathema to hegemony of any kind: not only that of the deep Catholicism informing the EU, but also the profound impulses that animate modern-day Russia, as well as those underlying Anglo-American economic imperialism.

De Rougemont's vision makes constant reference to a supernation above the separate nations, conceived to police their shared behaviour – this rather than the state in each country being seen as a mutually agreed space (parliament) without it being also an overarching spiritual instance or world economic vehicle. And yet, it is the very mark of the threefold social order that no such instance of unitary governance is contemplated.

Despite the good intentions, *and distinct from his federalist discussion*, de Rougemont's Deep Catholic view of Europe also prevents him seeing into the benign depths of Anglo-Saxon (distinct from Anglo-American) evolution. When not caught by its downside, its aim is to provoke the absence of external hegemony, so that every I can adopt this role. For the inner hegemony of the human spirit is the only hegemony that every soul in the end can respect and so defer to. It is this that thralldom to communism would have humanity not notice; just as Christian civilisation's failure to 'walk its talk' provides the spur to those who advocate the Nation of Islam in its stead.

## And so to Spring Valley....

### Anthroposophical Society in Viroqua Branch

A case study update

Kim Chotzen / Viroqua, USA

*'As we human beings set out to transform nature to our purposes, so the Archangels use us as raw material to be molded. We are the datum for them – what appears in the field of human consciousness to them is the aggregate of centers or focal points round which the inner experiences of man are grouped, insofar as [they] take place in the Intellectual, Mind or Consciousness Soul.<sup>35</sup> [The Archangels'] activity is, by comparison of a higher order... The Archangel Being, the guiding Spirit of a nation, is something which hovers above the individual members. Man's personal experiences which derive from his sense perceptions are wholly foreign to the Archangel who is guiding the people.*

*But there are intermediaries, and it is important that such intermediaries exist. They are the Beings we call Angels, and they mediate between the Archangel and Man... [They] are therefore the true intermediaries between the Archangels and the individual human being. They transmit the behests of the Folk Spirit to the individual souls and thereby help to determine what the individual can do, not only for his own evolution but for his whole people.'*

– *Mission of Folk-Souls / Rudolf Steiner, 1910, Oslo.*

The image of Rudolf Steiner creating an archetype for all activity (the refounded Anthroposophical

<sup>34</sup> *Europe: A Cosmic Picture*, Maria Schindler, New Knowledge Books, Horsham 1975.

<sup>35</sup> Steiner gives precise background to these elements previously in the lectures.

**Reinvigorating the Anthroposophical Society through Branch Finance**  
*Michaelmas Event at Spring Valley, New York / 6-8 October 2025*

*Two-day seminar:*

**Researching the financing of the Anthroposophical Society**

**Standing on the shoulders of others: the history of Threefold Branch**

*Three evening presentation-based conversations:*

**The Lost Section and the Task of Treasurers**

From endowment to curation to enactment

**From St Gallen to Spring Valley and Beyond**

The threefold foundation of the Anthroposophical Society

**Rudolf Steiner's House**

The history and future of the Goetheanum Association

Society), knowing as he did, seeing as he did how the spiritual hierarchies weave and work in human life, allowing them to find a way through human-created structures such that 'good might become'. This is what we see the work of the Treasurers Circle is striving to give life to.

Our work is being undertaken mindful of the history and development of the Anthroposophical Society in its early stages and the events leading up to the Christmas Conference, as also its subsequent journey, although that needs to be based on a careful interpretation of the *Bauverein* story.<sup>36</sup> We are also clear in our own minds of the need to strengthen the 'structure' of Rudolf Steiner's Deed concerning the Society and School in order to create a temple-home for protection from the Adversaries. However, unlike a fortress that needs walls, the Society affords protection via its double membership thresholds – Society, then School.

#### *Guiding Thoughts*

The overall image is that, just as the 37 Country Groups and Direct Branches to Dornach carry the General Anthroposophical Society, so the Groups and Branches within a Country Group carry that group (e.g. the Anthroposophical Society in America).

By linking through a shared financial 'structure', we can awaken financially and begin to see how, from the local to the worldwide level, we are 'One Society; Many Groups'. Backgrounding these financial images is that of the Angels working at the local and working fields level (Branches and

Groups), the Archangels working on a Country Group level, and the Archai in relation to the worldwide General Anthroposophical Society. These Beings, when given an earthly vehicle via the finances, can live and work amongst us in an ordered and ordering way.

The shared 'financial structure' has two main practical elements. Firstly, the Treasurers Guidelines agreed in 2019. Secondly, the chart of accounts template, which is conceived to identify and facilitate the Society (body) and School (soul) differentiation.

#### *History*

The Branch received official recognition from the General Council of the Anthroposophical Society in America on August 25, 2022. When I (Kim) joined at the end of 2023, it was in the process of identifying a name, based on the local history of its development over many years. I suggested that we name it the Anthroposophical Society in Viroqua, especially for the purpose of having a precise tax identity and separate bank account from the, till then, bank account that was held by one the members as a personal *dba* for the purposes of renting out the venue, including to several other activities. This was agreed and it was determined that the ASV Branch activity needed to be teased out from the original account arrangement. With this done, starting January 2024, the branch began its own 'formally autonomous' existence.

The aim throughout is to enable 'live' research into the nature and working of a local group/branch of the ASA for its own sake and as a contribution to rethinking the finances of Groups and Branches generally.

#### **Summer School in Penmaenmahr?**

There has been little response to date to the idea of an in-person meeting next year in Folkestone, and no response to our enquiry about whether this could happen at the Goetheanum. Even so, please note the dates **25–28 June 2026**, our 25th anniversary year, and please continue to send any comments or suggestions to: [economics@goetheanum.org](mailto:economics@goetheanum.org).

**There has, however been a suggestion received is that we head for Penmaenmahr in North Wales...**

<sup>36</sup> To understand this, one needs to read the April 2022 report on the chronology of the Society, but with careful attention paid to how it interprets the history of the

Bauverein > Goetheanum Association > General Anthroposophical Society.

*Economics Conference*  
*Section for Anthroposophy*  
**What does it mean to be  
a representant of  
anthroposophy in the  
field of economics?**

*Although people have varying interpretations of what Rudolf Steiner had in mind when refounding the Anthroposophical Society and inaugurating the School of Spiritual Science,<sup>37</sup> outwardly at least it is surely clear: the Society furthers the research carried out by the School as conducted by those who, having been members of the Society for two years minimum (in order to acquaint themselves with anthroposophy without yet becoming responsible for it) take a second step in membership and become its 'representants', to use the French word used by Rudolf Steiner to describe members of the School*

*That is my reading of Statute 9: The purpose of the Anthroposophical Society will be the furtherance of spiritual research; that of the School of Spiritual Science will be this research itself.<sup>38</sup> To this I find it is reasonable to add that, insofar as they also understand themselves to be in collegueship with Rudolf Steiner, the effective leadership of the anthroposophical movement inheres in the public initiatives of these representants of anthroposophy – more concretely spiritual science – in the many and varied fields of public endeavour.*

*This, at least and in essence, is how I understand things. It is a view, however, that also conceives section membership as part and parcel of joining the School, which one does de facto via the General Anthroposophical Section and by dint of one's public activity in the domains of the other sections. In other words, with the exception of the Youth Section, one cannot be a member of a section without first being a member of the Anthroposophical Society.*

*Attached to this is another consideration: as regards social scientific enquiry and economics in particular (i.e. for an Economics Section). If one claims to stand on a ground of spiritual science, does it matter if one is a representant or not? And if not, what does that status actually mean? Finally, in research terms, what, if any, difference does it make to be a representant: how different is its research to that of a non-representant?*

– chb.

I consider that being a representative of anthroposophy in the economic field also means not only being a person who investigates or someone who is very intelligent in the sense of reading many books and knowing exactly what the correct GA is, but also someone who also has the ability to put that knowledge into practice. A very powerful image for me was seeing the Representative of Humanity and understanding the gesture and background of that image: the human being balanced between the spiritual and the earthly.

On the other hand, being a representative means, for me, *being an example* of something I want to see in the world, and above all, through having lived the

experience and being able to integrate it, so that through it I can bring into the world what the spiritual world truly desires to be brought here. Being a representative is, in a certain sense, the channel through which the spiritual hierarchies can work in the world.

For a presentation at Goetheanum Studies, I composed this verse using my own phrases and words that make a lot of sense to me, which I saw in documents from the Economics Conference:

Firmly, I place myself in the economic life

I recognize and perceive money as  
bookkeeping and not money as a thing

I assume responsibility to act with balance in  
my finances

The world speaks to me through income  
statement and balance sheet

I become conscious and I associate with  
others to keep true the economic structure of  
the world.

– José Reyes Lovato / Quito, Ecuador

As a *representant* of anthroposophy in the field of economics, I continue searching for ways to develop and share greater clarity of understanding of the truths within Rudolf Steiner's economics lectures. Current questions I carry include:

- How do those economic truths impact questions about the organizational structures and funding of anthroposophical activities as associative endeavors in cultural life?

- How can collaborative development of activities which support adult financial literacy, including understanding 'money is the spirit realized', take place?

- How can money as bookkeeping lead towards an integrated understanding and harmonious working of the threefold nature of society?

– Charles Burkam / Amsterdam, Netherlands

Some obvious ways to represent anthroposophy in the world include speaking and writing about it. But anthroposophy is also represented by anyone who engages with it in a serious manner in some way. Anyone who does so thereby becomes a peculiar and significant phenomenon in the world. In encountering this phenomenon, the sensitive observer will sense a striving for the spirit that is based neither on tradition nor on an urge to escape but instead takes its start from completely inhabiting humanity's current situation. What is true generally is also true when it comes to a specific field of knowledge as in Section work: some will be able to begin to represent what becomes of a field when it is imbued with

<sup>37</sup> See notice of 7-9 November meeting at the Goetheanum on this very topic sent out during August 2025.

<sup>38</sup> GA 260. *The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society.*

anthroposophy in obvious ways while others may do so in less obvious ways, perhaps by merely engaging in an earnest and genuine striving to understand what the field may become.

– Patrick O'Meara / Washington, DC, USA

The description given in the EC *Digest* August 2025 accords with my own. Representing an understanding of economics based on spiritual science cannot be an abstract affair, but implies working within social processes. Such work is by its nature esoteric and karmic, and should be articulated as such. It is in this sense that one can speak of the anthroposophical 'movement', whether or not one locates oneself directly within this movement, or identifies a degree of alignment with Rudolf Steiner's intent, as well as the possibility to inform oneself and share insights with colleagues.

– Arthur Edwards / Stroud, England

*What does it mean to be a 'representant'?*

First, to see oneself as a colleague of Rudolf Steiner. Then to become a member of the Society, then of the School, and then of a Section within the School.

*And in regards to the Social Sciences Section and Economics as a particular sub-section within it, these examples of representants come to mind:*

Guenther Wachsmuth: travelling with Steiner keeping notes on both lecture contents and financial transactions. See *The Life and Work of Rudolf Steiner*, Whittier Books, New York, 1955.

Marguerite Doray: Former Waldorf teacher and faithful communicator of Waldorf values through her toy shop in Montreal, Canada.

Daniel Maeder: Recently deceased auditor in Switzerland, worked for many years with the Coopera 'Anthroposophical' Pension Fund especially.

– Meg Freeling / Columbus, Ohio, USA

As a representant in the field of economics, I endeavor, with unbreakable faithfulness to have clarity in all my financial relationships. I also seek integrity and wisdom within every economic interaction. The Aristotelian principles of right amount, right person at the right time, in the right way are guides for making these financial agreements. These simple pillars provide a foundation for my decisions in spending, loaning and

gifting my economic surplus. My participation with the Economics Conference and the Economics Group of the ASA keeps me close to Steiner's economics course and the statutes of the Christmas Conference.

– Lorene Allen / Amsterdam, Netherlands

At the Christmas Conference Steiner described anthroposophy as a living being, and the Society as its earthly vessel.<sup>39</sup> After a period in the Anthroposophical Society one may apply for admission to the School of Spiritual Science, thereby becoming a representant of anthroposophy.<sup>40</sup> This School is to consist of three Classes.<sup>41</sup> Rudolf Steiner spoke of the First as preparatory, charging members to become representatives of anthroposophical life in the world,<sup>42</sup> the Second as testing moral strength, and the Third as conferring responsibility.<sup>43</sup> Only the First was instituted, though the framework was never outwardly completed. The spiritual world responds to the human I in its striving for truth; this is not created by membership alone. The sharing of this work requires a vessel, which in practice requires membership. The Society is entrusted to provide that vessel; even so, the stream continues for the individual even when the organisation — and the possibility of sharing — is lacking.<sup>44</sup>

– Jason Britten / Ashford, England

It means seizing the opportunities to affect current conditions and developments encountered in the practice of economics — whether as a researcher, entrepreneur, or consultant — in ways that contribute to the healthy development of the threefold nature of social life. Providing a new perspective to inform an investment decision, for example, or deviating from current business practice. Putting the whole human being back into

economic thinking — even if the occasions to do so are infrequent and isolated — can trigger far-reaching consequences. It is to see the potential in economics to bond humanity together in a peaceful and creative society.

– Marcelo Delajara / Mexico City, Mexico

*What does it mean to be a 'representant' of anthroposophy in the field of economics?*

These days, when one joins the School of Spiritual Science, does taking this step include the conscious knowledge that one is also entering into the General Anthroposophical Section? And if one is a public



<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Closing Address, 1 January 1924.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Statute 5.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> GA 270, *First Class Lesson 1*, Dornach, 15 Feb 1924.

<sup>43</sup> GA 265, Vol. II, *The History and Content of the Esoteric School*, Editor's remarks (esp. p. 451ff).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

professional, that one can also join the corresponding Section for professional spiritual research?

This knowledge was not at all a part of my awareness when I joined the School 20 years ago. The local Class Holder said he assumed I knew how to meditate (which I didn't!) and that I knew to hold my brothers and sisters in the highest regard. There was absolutely no mention of becoming part of a school of spiritual scientific research and that, as one of its representatives, I would be taking on responsibility for metamorphosing social life! This latter image has only become real for me as I've participated as a colleague of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum.

Representing anthroposophy in the field of economics requires standing steady in the tumult of materialistic ideas about money, capital and finance. There is so much to stand *against* in today's world which derives from an ill-informed and incomplete image of the human being. Without getting angry, cynical, judgmental or blaming, being a representant requires standing, in thought, feeling and deed, *for* economic thought that ennobles rather than denigrates the human being. Such economic thought includes the axiom that capital, labor and land are not commodities and all else that follows. It stands in effect as a counterweight, even if only as a drop on its way to the great oceans, to the overwhelming modern circumstance of adherence to economic materialism.

*What difference if one is/is not a representative? (meaning to me: if one claims the ground of anthroposophy without being a member of the School.)*

Through this work, I have become aware of the essential nature of *right structure* if an activity (or ideal) is to be effective on earth as an expression between gods and human beings. (Is this) like the retort Rudolf Steiner speaks about in the Economics Course? Or land, labor and capital and three kinds of money as boundaries to economic life in a one-world economy. Without boundary and form to guide and create a possibility for truth and responsibility – i.e. without a temple on earth – how can gods and human beings find their way to each other?

It makes sense to me that without the structure of the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science with its sections, the good gods cannot find a home on earth in which to commune with those human beings with the will to create good. Even though I understand many of the reasons people claim to represent anthroposophy while actively claiming *not* to have regard for the Society and School, for me this is an untenable path that I do not trust. The clearer path is to reinvigorate the Society, with all its understandable confusion and faults, to endorse its structure so that the light of the Sun can radiate through it – (even through its cracks!) – to the world through the hearts (the foundation stones) of its members. It is as though, without the structure, the Sun's light becomes so diffuse that one cannot recognize from where the light comes.

*Does research differ if one is/is not a representative?*

Yes, it surely must differ. A consequence of research outside the School could be the risk of taking on adverse influence (no matter how well-meaning one is) – like a Fenris Wolf – because of the lack of inherent protection from the tendency to be self-referencing, a danger that Rudolf Steiner surely foresaw and sought to preclude by building a structure of collegiality between himself and the members such *that good might become*.

– Kim Chotzen

### **The Principle of Three**

*Echoing this section's theme, Stann Whipple from California wrote to say:*

The recent Whitsun zoom meeting was very informative and stimulating for me. Most of all it awakened in me a question about why I made the effort to initially join by attending an economics meeting at the Goetheanum. At that time I was a class teacher in a Steiner school in the UK and a member of the Pedagogical Section and the School of Spiritual Science.

In the past few years since leaving the pedagogical work as a class teacher in Steiner based schools on three different continents, I have focused on deepening my understanding of the 'Principle of Three'. Threefold is now 'trinary' for me. Not binary but the balancing of the three dimensional aspects that appear everywhere from the cosmic life of the hierarchies to time, space, color, etc.

In my present understanding of the 'economic life' as inspired by the lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in 1922, what is practiced in most cultures now needs to be separated from the rights and free spiritual principles, just as the United States Constitution tried (past tense? – Ed.) to separate 'church' and 'state'. The monetary systems would be based on the truth that any 'currency' would be an accurate representation of the values people created to serve the wants and needs of their fellow humans living physically somewhere on the Earth.

Is this focus on what I call the 'Trinary Truth Technique' actually useful to practicing associative economics and having an Economics Section? Does it resonate with EC colleagues?

## Economics Conference Section for Pedagogy Finance and Education

*In this section, we cast an eye over various events reported to us in the field of finance and education. Other activities are also on-going, of course, and we hope to have news of these in the next issue.*

### Scholarship Granting Organizations

Patrick O'Meara

I'm interested in hearing what colleagues think about the recently enacted US federal tax credit for donations to scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). Are there ways to create a scholarship program using money given through this tax credit that promotes the financial literacy of both students and schools? What characteristics should an SGO have, that is set up to gather and disburse money through this new tax credit?

My tentative understanding is this:

Through this legislation, beginning in 2027, individuals can receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit each year on their federal income taxes up to \$1,700 for money that is given to an SGO. So there is no cost to people wanting to make donations to support private education of various kinds up to this amount. It does require that the donors are able and willing to part with their money until the next year when it is returned in the form of a lower tax expense. This is not a voucher program as such things are often understood.

The SGOs can use money given to them to provide scholarships to students from households with income up to three times the area's median household income. Children from a large percentage of households will therefore be eligible to receive scholarships financed through money donated by people seeking to get this tax credit. Each SGO must disburse at least 90% of donations received each year, meaning up to 10% can be used to administer and promote the SGO. So, for instance, an SGO that gets 5000 donations at the maximum amount from each donor would have a \$8.5 million budget, \$7.65 million of which would need to be used to provide scholarships to students to attend a specific kind of school as defined by the SGO. How the SGO structures its scholarships is up to it: it can give many scholarships, say of \$2,500 each, or fewer larger scholarships, say of \$15,000 each, or whatever mix of amounts it decides on. The detailed rules applicable to this tax credit have not yet been devised.

An SGO must be approved at the state level in each state in which it provides scholarships. The rules for SGO scholarships vary by state with a minimum requirement being that the schools that ultimately receive the scholarship money are accredited schools. States have to elect to participate and some states are expected not to do so in part because of the concern that such funding undermines public schools.

This type of tax-credit is in place in several states with respect to state taxes. These tax-credits are sometimes for only a portion of the amount given and the school where a scholarship recipient goes must be in the same state as the taxpayer receiving the tax credit. The new dollar-for-dollar federal tax-credit means that an SGO can receive donations from people living anywhere in the country and then provide scholarships to students to go to schools in any state that has elected to participate. SGOs are permitted to select the schools where students receiving the scholarships they provide go, but each SGO's selection must include at least two schools. (An SGO cannot be set up to fundraise for a single school.) The criteria that an SGO uses to select schools are left to each SGO to determine.

SGOs usually have created criteria related to the religious affiliation of the schools they support. But the criteria can be that schools have a certain curriculum or pedagogy (such as Waldorf or Montessori) or the criteria might be something broader – for instance, that scholarships can be used at any non-sectarian school that seeks to promote human freedom.

#### *Some questions:*

Is there an opportunity to create an SGO that has as one of its criteria that a school teaches financial literacy and even itself seeks to be financially literate in its financing? As it grew such an SGO could also seek additional donations from businesses that seek to be financially literate in the use of their profits, using some of these donations to fund directly financial literacy programs at both public and private schools.

Would organizations such as ASiA and AWSNA endorse an SGO that has as its mission the furtherance of a free spiritual life generally, including the promotion of the financial literacy on which such freedom ultimately depends?

Are the requirements that states have of schools receiving funding through SGO scholarships too onerous and compromising? Or is this not an issue because schools are already complying with such requirements? Would administering an SGO be overly complicated?

#### *Some links:*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/03/us/federal-voucher-program-congress-private-school-tuition.html>

Article explaining state-level tax-credits for donations to SGOs:

[How States Use Tax Credits to Fund Private School Choice: An explainer](#)

An example of a school seeking donations through Ohio's tax credit:

<https://sainti.org/school/scholarship-granting-organization/>

Document with above text and the text of the legislation:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NfimOdV4iPE2mPNrhkGF5nqqke7Gzo-ay7s1BJ8V1Iw/edit?tab=t.0>



### Financial literacy and associative economics course for teachers

Online, but in person – is this possible?  
*Camila Pannain / Azzate, Italy and Maria Lúcia Sígolo / São Paulo, Brazil*

Financial literacy is a topic we have been discussing for some time and, as such, has been the focus of our studies and meetings under the rubric of *Dialogos – Associative Economy Dialogues* in recent years. So, when we knew about the publication of 'An economics curriculum – from 1st to 9th grade', a document prepared by Fionn Meier, together with two other teachers – Vanessa Pohl and Oliver van der Waerden – based on studies, but mainly on classroom experience, we felt called to translate it into Portuguese.<sup>45</sup>

So, in August 2024, we launched the Portuguese version at the Anthroposophical Society of Brazil (SAB). It is a great achievement, as it is rich in content which, although it does not exhaust the subject of teaching economics in schools, certainly opens many doors and can be used as a consistent starting point. The event was held online and in person, with the participation of around 17 people, including public school teachers, mathematics teachers, classroom and secondary school teachers, as well as a treasurer, economist and a social pedagogue for native Brazilian students from the Federal University of São Carlos. The participants were very curious and interested and thanked us for the initiative, recognizing the importance of the topic.

Similarly, we also presented this curriculum to the Federation of the Waldorf Schools in Brazil (FEWB), which culminated in an invitation to conduct an online course for teachers. With the support of FEWB, after a few months of preparation and much hesitation due to it being online, the course 'Financial literacy and associative economics for teachers' took place from April to June 2025 exclusively online, in six fortnightly meetings, each lasting two hours. The topics were organised as follows:

1. Introduction to Associative Economics
2. Economics from the individual to the whole - managing personal finances
3. The Waldorf curriculum in relation to economics and accounting
4. History of money up to the Renaissance
5. Single-entry and double-entry bookkeeping
6. Student presentations – demonstrations and closing

Between the modules, we provided a 'question and answer' session for anyone who wanted to clarify any content from the previous class, or to review the

main points presented for all students. This was important because, despite being 100% online, the course was not recorded and it was assumed that we would all be present at the same time. This online format has some limitations in terms of the use of resources, but the main loss was the face-to-face visual contact with the group, feeling people's reactions closely and eventually being able to respond according to those reactions, as well as being able to get closer to the students. In other words, as expected, the online format lost a lot in terms of interaction and concentration. On the other hand, it allowed people from different parts of Brazil to participate and raised awareness of the importance of the topic, as well as within different contexts, making its impact more comprehensive and more affordable.

Even though the course was initially intended only for teachers, we felt it was important to accept registrations from other interested individuals. As a result, we had a total of 18 participants, including 8 teachers, 3 school administrators, and the rest were individuals interested in the topic, such as accountants, economists, parents, or those with personal reasons for participating.

At the end of the course, participants were asked to evaluate it, we received 11 answers. See below some of the comments. In response to the questions, all participants, without exception, said they would recommend this course to other colleagues and that they would also like to explore the topics covered in the course in greater depth.



### What was most significant to you?

*'It's hard to say, because these topics challenged many beliefs and shook up many assumptions. Perhaps one image that stood out for me was when, while analysing the spreadsheets of double*

*entries, I saw a story; the numbers that symbolised money were there telling a story. And the fact that through daily accounting we look back on how our relationship with money is so closely linked to our freedom.'*

*'Visualising the possibility of the subject in curricula.'*

*'Getting closer to accounting. Understanding it better from an anthroposophical perspective.'*

*'Awareness of the resources that pass through my actions.'*

*'I feel it was quite challenging. Because it was online, at a distance, and it was the first class. For me, they are wonderful because talking about money touches on limiting beliefs. Many people are closed to the subject, and in anthroposophy, many fellow teachers treat it as if money were not worthy of being mentioned.'*

<sup>45</sup> Visit <https://associative-financial-literacy.com/resources/>, section 4.

**What have I learned and transformed in my teaching practice and/or in my work and life? What challenges have I faced?**

*'Family financial education. And I see more and more how to act in the classroom. Since I teach geography, and I saw in the double entry bookkeeping the money telling a story, it became much clearer to work on the "wheres" with my students.'*

*'The awakening to spiritual life that is expressed through accounting.'*

*'I am not a teacher, but I participate in the finance committees at school, and the content brought a lot of clarity about some processes and forms of communication.'*

*'I saw that I need to observe and control my financial life, and that this does not mean moving towards materialism, as I had imagined.'*

*'I was able to make the concepts tangible when I saw the practical examples. They were important in reframing the way I look at my personal finances and also in thinking of different ways to teach finance to young people.'*

**Working with Teachers in Ecuador**

*Notes from a conversation with Business Administrator, José Reyes Lovato*  
chb

What is the professional basis on which you yourself speak about these things? Do you speak as a professional in business administration? (I am not sure business administration is a fit for threefolding.) Do you charge them? If they had to pay would they ask you?

Have you ever set up or managed a school? If not, do you think you should speak about it? Never speak about something you do not have direct experience of. You have first to learn for yourself what it means to finance a school and to teach finance in schools or to teachers. Then you can speak to others.

Who is teaching the teachers threefolding? On what basis do they (and you) claim to know about threefolding? It is anyway not about threefolding in the first place. In *Die Kernpunkte*, Steiner says only teachers run schools. That is a matter and principle of professional conduct. Threefolding is implicit.

Teachers need to be taught how to run schools as enterprises; how to manage cash flow, enrollment, taxes, etc. When one knows about this, then one can discuss the different types of school: state run, private, etc. Likewise, in the West especially one needs to understand 'curriculum neutral capitation'. Unless teachers know all this they should not run schools, or teach.

So, how can they learn how to run a school? And how viable is the construct of a private school not run by teachers but by a board of directors? It is not about creating a community. It is about teachers –

and teachers only – running schools. By first creating their own business. Then everyone else has to finance them so they can do that. It is not about the parents or business people running a school. Only teachers and they have to understand they are entrepreneurs – meaning they have to meet all the challenges of modern educational life and policies.

It is not about going into the heart, but from the head through the heart and into the will. There is always good willing, but it is wasted when there is no financial literacy to support them in doing what they love to do. Where is this given in Waldorf seminars?

Do you work in coordination with fellow Economics Conference colleagues? Without cooperation it will be difficult to create a new community of people who really know social life, both macro and micro and from an Anglo-Saxon, rather than German, perspective because that is the cultural background of Latin America.

**Associative Financial Literacy**  
chb

I would like to express a concern. Many of us have been involved in the development of what one can call associative financial literacy – to distinguish it clearly from what is normally meant by financial literacy, which is only ever about how to understand and use the banking system, and so not become financially literate in fact! Indeed, the work we have done in recent years in the annual and related EC meetings came to a kind of culmination in the years 2015 to 2019 in Montreal and Folkestone, where something of a distillation of bookkeeping became possible.

Many of us have since used this as the basis for what we say or teach, but I am concerned that one does not stand in front of this work as if it were one's own, but that one clearly credits one's affiliation to the Economics Conference, while always acting in one's own right on the ground of what one can actually carry.

When it comes to advocating associative financial literacy, I think one should also be clear that there is the essential conceptual process of bookkeeping – from single through double to closing entries – and then there is the application of this in key practical fields, which I would characterise as:

*general financial awareness, entrepreneurial activity, teaching teachers and teaching students.*

I think the best effect is to be had when these areas are not muddled up in the one event. I am especially not convinced that one should offer public tuition on personal finance as this is a very private and tax-complicated area, also bordering on personal psychology. I think it best that one stays focused on practical activities – teaching, business, and so on – where the context is clearly in the public domain, as also the scrutiny. Individuals can extrapolate for themselves what associative financial literacy means in their personal lives.

## Curitiba, Comenio and catching breath

chb

Two research seminars have now been held in Brazil on the double theme of financing education and teaching financial literacy in high school. The first one, in Olinda, was carried by members of the Economics Conference in Brazil under the *Dialogos* name, and based on an invitation to teachers and administrators, primarily in the Waldorf movement, but understanding that as a public matter. It was built around two specific publications: *Freeing the Circling Stars* (by Christopher Houghton Budd) and the *Economics Curriculum* (by Fionn Meier and colleagues) – both now available in Portuguese<sup>46</sup> – and was attended by 20+ people.

The second event reversed the dynamic, with Thiago Baise and Daniel Havro offering to host a repeat event in Grao Saber school in Curitiba as a teacher/administrator led event, hosting people from other schools, with myself as invited seminar presenter (with translation mainly provided by Daniel Havro, Lucia Sigolo and Camila Pannain). Again, we had 20+ participants, again from many parts of Brazil, and again from a cross section of Waldorf schools, not only those recognised by the Federation. And again the basis was a thorough-going understanding of accounting.

It also gave rise to the conception of the Comenio Fund, in collaboration with Tré,<sup>47</sup> a seminal attempt to seek society-wide funding designed to let teachers free to develop education as they see fit, with administrators making it their task to facilitate the financing.<sup>48</sup>

I have been to Curitiba several times and it was interesting to experience the three schools there who took part this time and the clear sense of a 'democratic' mood everywhere, distinct from the mood of wealthier people who tend to promote Waldorf as a private school option.

Financially, both events entailed a mix of participants' contributions, third party donations, and self-financing on the part of Economics Conference colleagues. Another outcome of this second event was the two bilingual keynote videos recently uploaded on the Grao Saber site.<sup>49</sup> These provided much of the content that then backgrounded the research sessions.

Though I can well appreciate there is now a need to catch one's breath, I look forward to a next step in the development of the fledgling research community there, and even a nascent teachers association, both grounded in financial literacy.

## Lebenkunde /Life Studies

*Walter Johannes Stein:* We also need life studies on the various economic fields. I thought that the Waldorf school could lay the foundation for a future science of economics.

*Rudolf Steiner:* Then you have to determine who the experts are for the individual topics. These are people who have a sense of how to do things, who are truly practical experts. So, we don't need to find people like those listed today as speakers, but rather truly practical people who have a sense for our cause. Such people must be found. They would have to bring together the individual branches of life studies... There must be no such thing as charade or club-like behavior; it must be done objectively ... involving people who are connected to practical life.

– September 25, 1919, Stuttgart. GA 300a.

## Focus on Germany

*Preceded by Mannheim, for over 10 years, Karlsruhe has been a deliberate venue in Germany for the work of the Economics Conference. These three items illustrate well its scope and substance, carried as it is by several EC colleagues. All the events are at the Parsival Zentrum.*

## Economics Conference Symposium

*Capital, Land, and Labor as Reflected in Accounting*  
Friday, November 7, 2025

At this by-invitation meeting, we will explore the question of what needs to change in economic and legal life so that accounting does not reflect 'fictitious values'. We will build on the work on accounting that has been done so far within the Economic Conference, but also take into account the research work of Sylvain Coiplet on the distinction between economic and legal life.

- The difference between contract and law as a guide for distinguishing between economic and legal life.
- How must we transform our ideas and practices in economic and legal life so that accounting reflects only true values and not fictitious values? How do capital, land, and labor appear in accounting?

<sup>46</sup> See <https://www.aebookstore.com.br/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://treinvestimentos.com.br/>

<sup>48</sup> An echo of Patrick O'Meara's theme in previous article.

<sup>49</sup>

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uY\\_ityVzqULPRLrsoUNNCCi-v-riB61i5/view?usp=drive\\_link/](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uY_ityVzqULPRLrsoUNNCCi-v-riB61i5/view?usp=drive_link/)  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wIwF5PAb4kdRGHTITetbkiDJW0VK1vK/view?usp=sharing>

## Karlsruhe Retrospective

*A decade of proto Economics Section work in Germany*

*After more than twelve years, this seminar will review the panorama of themes addressed to date, then zoom in on three essential topics going forwards, and consider the realistic if controversial contribution an Economics Section could have made and may yet make in response to them. The background idea is to sense to what extent the participants, insofar as they are representative of England and Germany, can map ways that meet the economic and financial challenges facing humanity today. The following themes will be addressed.*

## Looking back on the work in Baden-Württemberg

*Is the (unfinished) task of the Anglo-Saxons understood? Having lead humanity into the vale of tears of economic materialism, what part can they play in leading us out of it? And can this restore truthfulness to karma and overcome the containment of Germany?*

## Associative Financial Literacy

*What is the state of associative financial literacy in Germany? And what is its contribution to overcoming the Anglo-Saxon bias of modern finance and monetary science, as also today's accounting precepts (also operative in Germany)?*

## Capitalising Initiative

*A key aspect of associative economics is its universalising of economic life, especially in regard to access to capital and whether one capitalises the I or the asset. How in Germany are individuals' initiatives capitalised, and what, if anything, stands in the way of doing so freely?*

## The 'Right On' Corporation<sup>50</sup>

*Conventional majority control by shareholders, together with such practices as paying managers in shares, lead to the huge wealth concentrations of people like Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk, providing them with the power and finance to act almost unilaterally in socio-economic life. Where is the David to this Goliath? Can the capitalisation of business be conceived and constructed differently?*

## Where money does *not* do business on its own account

*In December 1923, Rudolf Steiner expected the treasurer of the Anthroposophical Society, making a link, surely, between such a 'section' and finance. This section has not yet landed, but seen as a proto expression of it, unlike today's overarching financialism, is the financing of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum an example of where 'money does not do business on its own account'?*

## 'Thinking with that which flies away from the earth'

*Concerning the nature and modality of spiritual scientific research in economics, how do we understand this comment by Steiner? Can we provide examples, and do they 'cut ice' in today's mainstream?*

## Economics and Double-Entry Bookkeeping in Waldorf Education

*A Seminar for Class Teachers*

With Fionn Meier, M.A. and Oliver van der Waerden  
January 9–10, 2026

Introducing children and young people to today's economic world is one of the central tasks of schools. In addition to imparting a basic understanding of how it works, this also includes developing the skills to actively shape the economy. The technique of double-entry bookkeeping is a helpful tool for both. On the one hand, as a mirror of social processes it can introduce students to fundamental economic phenomena. On the other hand, it is itself an important tool for shaping current economic processes.

In his pedagogical lectures, Rudolf Steiner suggests introducing elementary bookkeeping as early as grades 7 and 8. This seminar is intended to be a support for all classroom teachers without prior knowledge who would like to teach the subject of economics and accounting at this grade level or who would like to gain further inspiration. The teaching practices presented in this seminar have been successfully taught by various teachers at this grade level.

## Economics Conference Section for Agriculture New Steps

*Economics Conference colleagues seem to be 'making noise' in the field of bio-dynamic farming. Here are two examples of what one hopes might increase...*

## Costa Rica / 38<sup>th</sup> Conference

*chb*

The 38<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the bio-dynamic movement in Latin America took place this Michaelmas, with a link to economics.

Through the offices of Eduardo Rincon, co-leader of the Agricultural Section, and Mauricio Garay, a professional in project management in Mendoza, Argentina, a contribution in the field of financial literacy was offered. This was welcomed and Natalia Conti took part, providing a full course in financial literacy. Here is the event's publicity:

This year's Latin American Biodynamic Conference will take place in Costa Rica from September 21 to 25. The venue is the Cantalagua Tierra Viva biodynamic farm in San Ramón. The program includes a variety of interactive, practice-oriented, educational offerings and workshops on key topics of biodynamics in Latin America. It is rounded off with artistic and spiritual activities such as eurythmy, singing, painting, and meditation. Each activity also creates an opportunity for exchange and networking.

<sup>50</sup> *The Right On Corporation* refers to a study by Christopher Houghton Budd. Conceived in Santa Rosa, California (i.e. at the farthest point west), it directly challenges the ruling

from 1886 which US corporations use to claim their autonomy from democratic processes. (Search [aebookstore.com](http://aebookstore.com).)

The conference invites all participants to see themselves as co-creators of the event and welcomes the sharing of personal experiences. Each contribution is valuable and weaves into a rich and complex co-creation that enriches the basis of biodynamics in Latin American countries.

### England / BD Research Conference *chb*

Bio-dynamic research is going great guns and this year its third annual gathering took place at the Royal Agricultural University, Cheltenham, England. Close on 200 people took part from all over the world, with the event overseen by Eduardo Rincon, and his colleague, Ueli Huerter, also in attendance.

At Eduardo's instigation, I presented my research proposal on 'True Trading'. Afterwards, Eduardo and I drove to Penmaenmahr, where, at the twin stone circles, we gathered with key players in the *Demeter* movement and those involved in formal research.

For those unfamiliar with Penmaenmahr, there are two stone circles: one small, one large. It is not at all difficult to see in them a presentiment of the two cupolas of the first Goetheanum. Similar can be said of the twin temples at Samothrace in northern Greece.

Conversely, looking forwards, not backwards, one can ask – as we do on the last page – if the twin space idea does not have important relevance for today's outer social life, which seems so under stress and without structure.

After the visit, as it happens, I met with Stuart Bain, an accountant from nearby Liverpool, who I first met as a youth working on the roof of the new farm at L'Aubier in Switzerland in 1988. He had been in recent touch, asking for a working lunch for which he would come all the way to where I live in Folkestone. I said I'd be in his neighbourhood at Penmaenmahr. "Even better; that is where I spent much of my youth!"

These are 'crumbs on the path', of course. Make of them what you will, but at times like ours the veil between the spiritual and the material can become very thin...



## From the Archive

*This journal has many antecedents published since May 1980. In an early iteration as New Economy, the theme of the next article was touched on. We asked Andrew to revisit it with this new version.*

### The Merchants in Venice

*Andrew Wolpert / London, England*

*Andrew Wolpert observes how we are all so 'conveniently' distracted by irrelevant binary polarities. Shakespeare's play 'The Merchant of Venice' offers us the chance to see how economic life can be understood as a quest for balance.*

Economic activity is the expression of concomitant spiritual activity. The implications of this become apparent when we realise we are unavoidably involved in both the economic and spiritual realms (as well of course in the domain of rights), irrespective of how conscious we are of this. The illusion that economic activity, particularly commerce, is the inimical antithesis of spiritual activity is dispelled by the dynamic forces and powerful images in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*.

The distinction between money-lending and trade, which has so often been a cornerstone in the interpretation of this play, does not stand up to close examination. The historically proscribed practice of usury, further demonised in the pursuit of antisemitism, masks the reality that interest, however gained, arises, in one way or another, through a certain advantage being taken. The moneylender's extortionate rate is no worse than the merchant's brutal treatment of his galley slaves and exploitation of those who provide the goods he so profitably sells in Venice. As far as the acquisition of their wealth is concerned, Shylock and Antonio are merchants who get rich by providing, at profit to themselves, what others want. There is no moral basis for distinguishing between usury and trade in a mercantile society. Our capitalist economy is built on the ethos of selling at the highest possible price what has been acquired or made at the lowest possible cost. This is liable to moral censure only if it causes need and hardship.

The mistaken proposition that this play is a moral showcasing of a good Christian versus an evil Jew easily leads to the mistaken contention that the play is antisemitic. Antonio's behaviour is far from a paragon of Christian virtue, and the weaknesses of both men are universally human and cannot be explained by their religions. The significant difference between Antonio and Shylock is not their religions or how they make their money: it is in what they do with their gains.

In a healthy economy money circulates. Money that is kept in a vault or hoarded under the bed does not serve the economic well-being of society. Antonio's wealth is invested in trade and promotes ventures, Shylock's wealth is amassed at home. Although Antonio is generous to his friends, he is neither necessarily a nice guy nor immune from the sin of greed. Shylock's motive of revenge, repressive paternity, and avarice are universal human failings that manifest in people of all faiths.

If the play is seen not as a moral tale about good and evil, but as a quest, then the dynamic between the flawed individualities of Antonio and Shylock reveals something beyond their failings and analogous money-making activities. The 'stagnant' money that Shylock provides is now released and enables Bassanio to sail to Belmont. He wants to win the rich lady and leaves Venice as a fortune hunter. When he gets to Belmont, Portia's inestimably precious self opens in him the intuition precisely not to fall for the temptation to opt for riches in a Venetian sense. Portia herself is bound and unfree in Belmont. When Bassanio chooses 'base' lead instead of gold or silver, he wins her, and also releases her from her dead father's wise but restrictive conditions. The successful quest for Portia then enables the liberated and liberating spirit of Belmont to descend into the inflexible legal system of Venice and bring about the change that could never arise from the stagnant status quo there.

The analogy of money and blood is instructive. The beneficial flow of money in an economy corresponds to the healthy circulation of the blood in the body. Antonio's wealth is all invested in global trading ventures, Shylock's is hoarded at home. It is the fact that blood will flow which Shylock had not provided for in the bond that finally defeats him.

The wholly 'un-Christian' treatment Shylock is subjected to at the end merits exploration that lies beyond the scope of this essay. It has come to evoke horror and sympathy rather than any triumphalism of good over evil, as indeed does his well-known plea for equality – Hath not a Jew eyes? (Act 3 Scene 1). But it is precisely not his physical characteristics or even his usury that makes Shylock different, for in these things as he rightly says he is indeed like Antonio and everyone else. The heart and pulsing blood are the organs of our evolving Ego. It is symbolic that Antonio risks losing his heart, that that is that very physical organ of Antonio's that Shylock craves, and that he has ignored the flowing of the blood. But it is also from the heart of Antonio's prejudiced being that his offensive and contemptuous attitude to Shylock emanates. It is on the threshold of the heart's blood that these two protagonists bring each other to the brink of death.

Dealing with this play entails the need to navigate the perilous waters between the rightful vigilance against antisemitism and the cowardly silence out of fear of being seen as antisemitic. Engaging with and refuting the charge against Shakespeare that this play is antisemitic also lies beyond the scope of this text. Suffice it to say here that both these merchants in Venice, one a Jew and the other a Christian, are shown struggling with their less than fully human condition, but it would be facile to attribute what they are challenged with to their religions. Neither Antonio nor Shylock are presented as particularly attractive individuals. The real common humanity lies not in the sharing of a similar physical body; it is found in the striving of every spirit that longs to reach Belmont, and in how one can support another in that quest. Such a quest also involves an element of transformation. It is the idle and inert material substance from Venice that is transformed and even redeemed by being placed it in the service, not just

of striving for Belmont, but of enabling Belmont to resolve a stalemate in Venice.

It would not occur to anyone to discredit the Waldorf movement because it was funded by drug money. The possible morality of how money is made neither sanctifies nor contaminates what the next person does with it. Michael, the Spirit of our Age, is not concerned with origins but with our aims and intentions. The story of these merchants in Venice is a powerful illustration that even in our still far from achieved humanity, the motives we cherish and the ideals we espouse give us the chance to participate in the transformation of matter. Observing how I relate to and work with money gives me an uncompromisingly true reflection of my understanding of the connection between money and spirit.

#### **Cause for thought?**

#### **Twin cupolas, the Goetheanum and parliament**

Many of Rudolf Steiner's lectures contained details derived from his supersensible perception, brought down, as it were, to the edge of the sense world and expressed in its language. The task of his fellow researchers not able to replicate his insightfulness is to begin with the earthly story and corroborate his statements 'upwards' using common sense. In terms of scholarship that can mean undertaking masters or doctoral projects that carry the baton over, so to speak, into conventional thinking. Might it be that when one does this one comes close to insights on a par with his?

One such is the thought that the twin houses of many parliaments or congresses will begin to find their meaning out of the future, no longer out of the past. Meditating on the significance for outer rights life of the twin cupolas of the first Goetheanum as it became metamorphosed into the Anthroposophical Society is one example. But do our research projects come close to such a theme? Is research in the School a random private, anarchic, self-selecting affair, or does it need coordinating, even commissioning, in order to have world effectiveness?