



# Associate!

A MONTHLY DIGEST FROM THE WORLD OF ASSOCIATIVE ECONOMICS

JULY 2012

THEME

**'Krisis' =  
Decision Time**

## CONTENTS

A Sign of Our Time	3
<b>Euro-free Currency</b>	
Feature	4
<b>The Optional Euro</b>	
AE-Exchange	7
<b>News and Views</b>	
Accounting Corner	7
<b>Current Theory</b>	
Notices	8

### ONE-WORLD ECONOMY

*Humanity is now part of a one-world economy. Despite diverse interpretations of this fact ranging from 'alternative' to neo-liberal, the challenge is to reach an understanding of today's economy that all can 'own'.*

### ASSOCIATIVE ECONOMICS

*Non-partisan and based on the idea that economic life is the shared responsibility of all human beings, associative economics aims to play its part in this great task.*

### RUDOLF STEINER

*Associative economics recognises its debt to Rudolf Steiner, whose insights make a valuable contribution to the task of developing a modern humanity-wide economy.*

## The 'Greek' Crisis

A chance for deeper research

**Michael Tsigotsides**

*Originally written in July 2011 as an attempt to initiate a discussion on these matters, this article asks if the Greek crisis is an indication of a turning point in the direction of the recent development of Europe as a whole (or perhaps of the world entirely)? Looked at in terms of symptomatology and without going into the technicalities, does the crisis point to a deeper shift in consciousness and spiritual awareness?*

During the last two years, the interest of much of the world, especially of Europe, has been focused on Greece's unstable financial situation, which began with interference by some influential big international investors, whose speculation foreshadowed the approaching international monetary difficulties.

The voices about European (or even international) "solidarity" with Greece have become more and more loud, mainly in the Eurozone. Only this "solidarity" is intermingled with the wish to avoid a collapse of the European monetary system and the euro. A dilemma arose, mainly in Germany, whether a country like Greece should be supported. The feeling was that Greece is not a reliable partner and many statements in the European press created an atmosphere of opposition and reservation, combined with loss of confidence in the Greek people.

### **Troikanomics or Direct Democracy?**

The first agreement came between Greece and EC, ECB and IMF – the 'troika' – which imposed austerity conditions on the Greek government that were very hard for the Greek people. Politically conflicted, the Greek government accepted the conditions against the will of many Greeks, and prepared for hard changes in the payment and taxation system. After a first year of economic burdens and restrictions, the result was a depression, but no improvement of the financial balance.

Born in Spain, the movement of "indignants" (Los Indignados) spread to Greece, and hundreds of thousands of people in Athens and other cities gathered together in plazas, mainly in Syntagma Square (Constitution Square), in front of the Greek parliament in Athens. This movement has distanced itself from all parliamentary work and has withdrawn its trust in politicians.

After forty days of "councils" in Syntagma, where many artists, academics and social philosophers contributed, together with all the other people, in an atmosphere of "direct democracy", there came a black climax, with a "war" between the police forces and various groups of rebels. The peaceful "indignants" tried to reorganize themselves, but parliament refused to open a dialog with them, preparing instead new and harder measures under the pressure of its European partners.

Both Russia and China have shown interest in helping the financial situation, but the European Union has not allowed such an intervention.

### **Time for renewed social understanding?**

Awoken by the waves of international turbulence, there are now sounding many serious voices from well-known people in the economic, scientific and cultural spheres questioning the way society is developing. Many concepts, such as the monetary system, banking, capital, market, competition, even democracy and freedom, are being revisited. Has the time come for a revival of the idea of the threefold structure of the social organism and of an economic life that recognizes the spiritual dimension of existence that Rudolf Steiner sought to introduce nearly 100 years ago?

Consider the widely used concept of "competition", in the sense of antagonism. No one today can reckon an investment, private or institutional, without examining the competitive capacity of the project. But what alternative concept might one apply instead?

Competition means simply that two players are trying to surpass each other. They feel isolated, separated from each other and in opposition to each other. This first presupposes individualism, atomism! It is a process that we have to go through, in order to discover ourselves. It has been

CONTINUED OVERLEAF