

Division of labour and Money as a number without value

The division of labour does not stem from a master plan

It is indeed "... the success of human activity, but by no means the execution of any human design". (Ferguson, page 187)

Émile Durkheim wrote in his dissertation: "Although the division of labour has existed for a long time, it was only at the end of the last century that societies began to become aware of this law, which until then they had suffered almost unnoticed". (Durkheim, page 1)

Hand money, book money and circulation

What began as an object of exchange and enabled the double transition of two things destined for consumption in a two-way relationship is still handled in the same way today, although in the course of history it lost not only material value but also materiality itself.

Hand money in circulation has become less - compared to book money. It is easier to handle when the volumes of individual transactions become larger or when payments must be made at distant locations. The circulation of book money is no longer regional but global. The borders of the balance sheet books of international banks and corporations have spun another web over the web of national borders that is essential for doing business.

End of material value

Richard Nixon cut the last thread to a material value 52 years ago - probably without knowing in which historical context he was accomplishing something that pointed far beyond himself. In the social division of labour, money has thus turned from an individual means of exchange with value - or reference to a value - into an organisational means of distribution.

Money as a means of liquidation in the division of labour

Among the thinkers who took up the division of labour in Durkheim's sense was Johann Karl Rodbertus. His "Threefolding of Basic Social Relations" almost presupposes the threefolding of the social organism of Rudolf Steiner:

"The division of labour, like the legal order and the communication of spirits, is one of these three great basic social relations in which the state and humanity are necessarily linked, and in which history moves towards its goal." (Rodbertus 1842, page 135)

He elaborates on various aspects of the division of labour:

"The division of labour should be called the community of labour. [...] The "world division of labour", to which Gioja first drew attention, only corresponds to its full concept".

"The division of labour could just as well be called the division of what has been worked, for this concept is only the necessary complement of the former."

"It is one of the basic relations of social life itself, namely, that basic economic relation in which a community is given, in which, according to the matter, one works for all and all for one. This rule of the highest solidarity is its last principle." (Rodbertus 1854)

The numbers on the banknotes and coins

The economist and banker Friedrich Bendixen, an authoritative voice of his time, had written after the publication (1905) of Georg Friedrich Knapp's "Die staatliche Theorie des Geldes" (The State Theory of Money) on the state of the theory of money: "However, progress can only be expected at all when one is comfortable to proceed not only for the legal side, as Knapp did, but also for the economic treatment of money, from the national payment system. One can only treat money exhaustively scientifically if one looks at it with the eye of the political economist." (Bendixen, page 3)

Thirteen years later (Bendixen died in 1920, Knapp in 1926), Hans Owesny dedicated himself to the task of incorporating the practical use of money in economic activity into its legal reality. He distinguished between different states of economic activity, the last of which was economic activity with traffic/trade in fully developed cooperation with one another in the division of labour. Self-sufficiency or economic egoism are becoming increasingly disruptive.

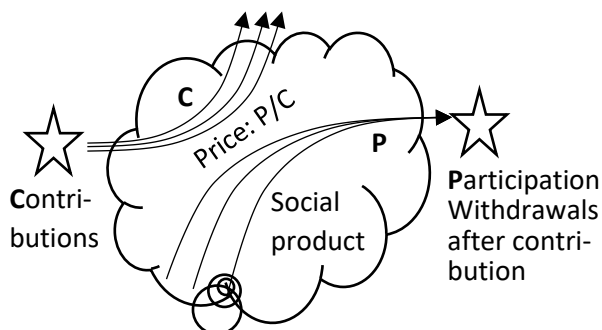
Owesny's thoughts create the conscious transition from the barter economy of self-supplying economies of different sizes to externally-supplied foreign supply without the illusion of self-supply with value-money. In doing so, he does not start from the individual transaction, but from the totality.

"If money does not act through a value, this can only be a system in itself, according to which this action could still be explained. According to this historical insight, then according to the given facts already, money today cannot be explained from its manifestation, but only from the totality of economic processes." (Owesny, page III)

It thus does justice to the division of labour as the long unnoticed transformative force for which no insider formulated a plan that everyone then adhered to.

Prices become dimensionless division ratios rather than value-content indications.

"The price is a ratio of division and not of value. Ratios can only be expressed in numbers, the price is therefore a numerical ratio. The meaning of the money figure - as a number - is thus justified." (Owesny, page VII)



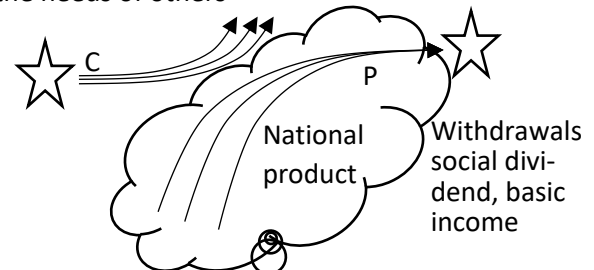
Economic contributions to the national product

Goods and services for the needs of others emanate from the individual contributor to the social product (C). His needs are provided for by many others (P). The relation between contributions and withdrawals P/C then represents a value-free distribution figure that was once a purchase price.

Gustav Schmoller, after a detailed study of the division of labour, demands a basic subsistence as a social consequence of the division of labour: "Primarily, however, if a full division of labour is to

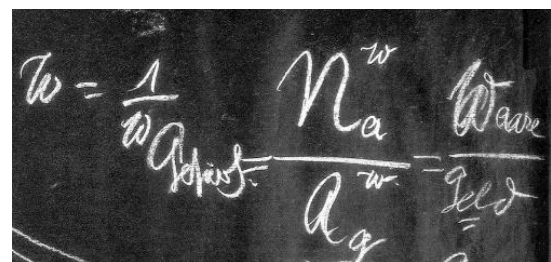
take place anywhere, social institutions must provide for the subsistence, food, clothing and housing of those who devote their entire labour to others. These first elementary cares for the direct subsistence can be taken from the individual, eliminated to a certain extent from his direct purposes in life." (Schmoller, page 48)

Activities in the field of "care", volunteering for the needs of others



Contributions to the coherence of society

Did Rudolf Steiner think similarly in the National Economic Course?



Detail of the blackboard drawing of 27 July 1922
GA K 58/24, 1st edition, 2001, page 55

One can see that he starts from the whole process and distinguishes a debit-hit money of double-entry bookkeeping, of exchange, from a money based on sharing, on division.

"And we have to recognise in an economic process based on the division of labour that the quotient of the commodity present in the economic organism and the money present in the economic organism - if we look at it not as that which we count in the tills, but as that which is seized by the spirit of men - represents an interaction in which money constitutes the divisor. And in this interaction - but in such an interaction that cannot be represented by subtraction, for instance, but by division - in this interaction actually consists the health of the national economic process." (Steiner, page 64)

What do we owe each other when it is no longer gold?

If we no longer exchange coin values - what do we owe each other as humanity, which in the meantime has noticed that with the division of labour it produces an enormous spectrum of goods and services, but in the process has forgotten to look after Pachamama, Mother Earth?

Do we owe ourselves a mindful and sustainably created "enough for all" of what everyone always needs on the shelves? Can the handling of "money" as a means of liquidation of the division of labour show us in the future the right distribution of goods and services in the mirror of a giant accounting?

"Basically, we have what one could call bookkeeping, accounting, which extends over the whole world economy. It is world accounting; for the action which is performed when any item passes over or over means nothing else than the writing down of an item to another place. In reality, however, this is accomplished by the transfer of money and goods from one hand to another. Basically, it makes no difference whether the possibility is brought about of placing the items in the right place in a gigantic bookkeeping system covering the whole world economy and then directing the whole so that only the credit balances are transcribed, or of writing out the relevant entry and giving it to the person concerned so that the thing is carried out in reality. So we have world accounting as a monetary turnover. And that is what everyone can see, and that is what we must strive for. For in this way we have given back to money that which it can only be: the external means of exchange. For otherwise money is nothing else, if we look into the depths of the national economy, than the means of the mutual exchange of services. For men live by commodities, and not by the signs of these commodities, in reality." (Steiner, page 203)

And the signs are moved by the commodities, the reflection by what is reflected.

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