

Book Review by Sherry Wildfeuer

ASSOCIATIVE ECONOMICS: SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD by Gary Lamb, 164 pgs., available from AWSNA Publications by contacting [publications@awsna.org](mailto:publications@awsna.org) or 518-634-2222.

Do Rudolf Steiner's suggestions for economic and social reform, articulated in the early 1900s, have any relevance in today's world? Are they a mere utopian dream with no road from here to there? Would they require a different, more virtuous humanity than the one that created our present socio-economic conditions? In his new book, *Associative Economics: Spiritual Activity for the Common Good*, Gary Lamb tells how he came to see Steiner's ideas about associative economics as an eminently practical way to achieve social change. He cites current examples of effective, innovative work and gives such helpful tools as an Associative Relations Audit for businesses, farms and other organizations to use for self-evaluation and transformation through collaboration rather than competition.

Gary shows that a healthier future will indeed require creative, independent-minded people who see their efforts within a broad context and are motivated to work for the common good rather than mere personal gain. Therefore an educational system will be needed to cultivate the talents and support the full development of the younger generation so society can be continually invigorated by fresh ideas. The education of children must not be the purview of government and business, whose intention is to produce workers to perpetuate the status quo.

Issues such as local responsibility for land use, how to set a true price for marketable products, and the appropriate tasks and limitations of government all find their place in a differentiated, comprehensive overview. What has been called "the threefold social order" based on Rudolf Steiner's books and lectures has received a clear, contemporary exposition which leaves no doubt as to its value. It provides an insightful guide so that each one of us can find a way to contribute towards a more positive social future.

This book does not assume prior familiarity with Steiner's ideas and therefore makes an excellent, accessible introduction to his work. Yet it will also be of interest to long-time students of anthroposophy who would appreciate a comprehensive overview of Steiner's contribution towards social renewal. This book will be ideal study material for groups of teachers, colleagues in business or agricultural endeavors, and communities working for social change.

Gary Lamb is currently a senior researcher at the Center for Social Research at the Hawthorne Valley Association in Harlemlville, NY. He is author of two books and numerous essays, has lectured widely, taught high school economics, and edited *The Threefold Review*.