

April 8, 1999

REPORT ON THE FRINGE CONFERENCE

Dear Colleague,

The Association for Heterodox Economics 1999 One-Day Fringe Conference at the Royal Economic Society Conference at the University of Nottingham on 30 March 1999 was a resounding success. First of all, eighteen papers were given without a hitch. The papers were interesting and thoughtful and the ensuing discussion fun and energetic. In fact, some discussions went on well into the tea breaks. The plenary session on the future of heterodox economics was well attended. Luigi Pasinetti's, Alan Freeman's, and Victoria Chick's positive comments were well received, especially after the dismal picture I painted. Secondly, tea and coffee were served on time and we even got a free lunch, as it appears the Nottingham Conference Centre made a mistake and prepared a lunch for the Conference. Lastly, forty-eight economists registered for the Conference; there were forty-four registered participants at the Conference; and two individuals sneaked in for the plenary session. This meant that each session and the plenary session was well attended. I would like to thank all those who participated in the Conference for making it a success. I would especially like to thank the CSE and Peter Reynolds/Economic Issues for their support.

After some discussion at the Conference, it was agreed that another fringe conference should be held at the same time/place as the RES Conference--which takes place in July 2000 at St. Andrews. At the time of the discussion, the RES had not reacted to the existence of the Conference. However, the following day there was a meeting of the RES Conference and Programme Committee and apparently strong views were voiced about the Conference. It appears that some committee members objected to the Conference because it portrayed the RES in a bad light--that is as a closed organization not willing to tolerate heterodox views. Moreover, they would not like a repeat of a fringe conference next year at the RES 2000 Conference. The Local Organizer for the 2000 RES Conference also talked to me about the situation and suggested that heterodox economists become involved in the RES Conference and not hold a separate conference. In short, it appears that the RES may take a pro-active stance against another fringe conference next year.

I am open to suggestions on how to proceed. One option would be to propose special sessions via the RES Programme Chair. However, there is no certainty that a special session(s) would be accepted

as the Programme Chair decides which special sessions to accept. In any case there are usually about 4-6 invited sessions at the conference and various groups do compete for them. A second option would be to request the RES to put on an additional parallel session devoted to heterodox economics and that a heterodox panel select the papers. This would involve around 23 papers over the course of the Conference. It would also mean that the AHE would not be sponsoring a fringe conference. A third option would be to hold an AHE Conference at some other time and place. And finally, the fourth option would be to ignore the RES and hold a fringe conference just like we did this year. These options are not mutually incompatible; it is possible to pursue a course of action that involves some combination of the above options. Please let me know what you think about the various options and suggest other possible options. I would like to get your comments within the next two weeks.

Finally, the costs of the Fringe Conference is approximately £500.00 (although I have not yet received the final bill). The conference fees come to £190.00; and the Open University has promised another £100.00, bringing the total to £290.00. CSE has promised support, but I would not like to ask them for more than £100.00. Hence, I am facing a shortfall of £110.00. Alan Freeman and I will make up the shortfall, but if anybody has some spare cash to donate to a worthy cause, I would gladly accept it--make your check out to IWW-AHE. And if you could send it to me within the next two weeks, I would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Dr. Frederic S. Lee

Appendix

Affiliations of the Conference Participants

- 11 Conference of Socialist Economists
- 25 Post Keynesian Economics Study Group
- 5 Cambridge Realist Workshop
- 3 International Working Group on Value Theory
- 3 European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy
- 1 International Schumpeter Society
- 1 Economists Allied for Arms Reduction
- 1 European Union Network for Industrial Policy
- 2 European Society for History of Economic Thought
- 12 Undergraduate/Graduate Students