Reports from Area Correspondents

In Austria

There are no special journals or institutions dealing with questions of methodology in Austria in spite of the big role which Austrian economists (foremost Carl Menger) played more than a century ago in the "Methodenstreit" between historical and analytical economics. But there are occasional concerns about methodological problems and these will be reported as they come along.

The "Forum Alpbach" is a well-known annual gathering in the alpine village of Alpbach in the Tyrol where scientists and philosophers from many countries meet every summer to discuss with experts and laymen various fundamental questions and problems in several interdisciplinary working groups. Methodological questions of one sort or another, which are also of interest to economists, come up almost every year. In 1990 one working group dealt with the theme "Freedom of thought or methodological strait-jacket? About the cognitive practice in the natural sciences" which brought up many problems which are also relevant in the social sciences. In August of this year a group will deal more generally with the theme "Theory and Reality: Models of Progress in the Sciences". This group will be led by Dr. Jack Birner from the University of Limburg and a natural scientist.

Kurt W. Rothschild
University of Linz

In Finland

A conference on "Conversational economics-Critical methodology" was organized on 9-10 November, 1990, at the University of Joensuu, in Eastern Finland. Nine papers were in the program, including "The disputed blessing of unrealisticness: Remarks on the method of isolation in economics" by Uskali Mäki (Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Uppsala); "Was Keynes a realist" by Ralf Eriksson (Abo Akademi, Turku); "Falsificationism and economics: A reconstruction and immanent critique of Mark Blaug's methodology" by Raoul Grünstein (Swedish School of Economics, Helsinki); "The expert discourse on Finnish free trade agreements as rhetoric" by Visa Heinonen (University of Helsinki); "With and without the straight jacket: Economic actors and the economist's know-how" by Timo Tammi (University of Joensuu); "Considerations of environmental economics in the light of ecophilosophy" by Markku Ollikainen (University of Helsinki); "Comparative perspectives on rival approaches within environmental economics" by Eija Moisseinen (University of Joensuu); "On the development of neoclassical economics" by Jorma Sappinen (University of Helsinki); "The Heckscher-Ohlin theorem before the neoclassicals" by Jukka-Pekka Piimies (University of Helsinki).

The Annual Conference of the Finnish Society for Economic Research took place in Turku, 11-12 February 1991. Again, a relatively large number of papers related to the methodology of economics were presented. Philip Mirowski (University of Notre Dame) gave two talks, "How to construct a theory of value without using the model of mathematical physics" and "Will chaos save neoclassical theory?". The other papers were "Becker's new theory of consumer behavior: A methodological study" by Jorma Sappinen (University of Helsinki); "An inquiry into the nature and causes of the use of the notion of homo-economicus: Self-interest and Adam Smith's conception of man" by Ralf Eriksson (Abo Akademi, Turku); "Hybridization and the growth of economics: The case of new institutional economics and neoclassical marxism" by Timo Tammi (University of Joensuu); "The expert discourse upon Finnish EFTA free trade agreement as economic policy rhetoric: The first two steps of rhetorical analysis" by Visa Heinonen (University of Helsinki); "Mirowski on the marginalist revolution: The case of Leon Walras" by Suvi-Anne Siimes (University of Helsinki); "Edgeworth in Mirowski's history" by Jukka-Pekka Piimies (University of Helsinki); "Causal processes versus equilibrium states" by Uskali Mäki (Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Uppsala); "The
method of Austrian economic theory” by Martti Vihanto (Turku School of Economics).

Uskali Mäki
University of Helsinki

In Ireland

A one-day seminar on “The Methodology of Economics: Critical Perspectives on Recent Development”, organized by Thomas Boylan and Paschal O’Gorman under the auspices of the National Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science of the Royal Irish Academy, took place at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin on 23 November, 1990. Papers, which were followed by lively and critical discussion, were presented by Paschal O’Gorman, University College, Galway; “Formal Versus Historical Models of the Economic Order: A Philosophical Perspective”; Thomas Boylan, University College, Galway, “Economic Methodology in the Post-Positivist Era: Progress or Rhetoric?”; Jonathan Gorman, Queen’s University Belfast, “Ethics and Economics”; R. O’Donnell, The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin, “The Methodology of Economics: An Applied Perspective”. These papers are currently being edited by Thomas Boylan and Paschal O’Gorman and will be published by the Social Science Research Centre at University College Galway.

Thomas A. Boylan
University College Galway

In U.K.

The Review of Political Economy will be holding its annual conference in Malvern from the 13th to the 15th of August. As in past years, a good proportion of papers are likely to address philosophical issues in economics. Amongst those scheduled to speak are Kenneth Boulding, Peter Earl, Jack Gilbert, Tony Lawson, Philip Mirowski, Karl Mittermaier, Colin Rogers, Kurt Rothschild and Chris Torr. Anyone interested in attending should write to the organiser, John Phoebe, Department of Economics, Leicester Polytechnic, PO Box 143, Leicester, LE19BH, UK.

Visitors to Cambridge may be interested in attending a seminar/reading group devoted to Realism and Economics. Meetings are held every Monday evening of full term. Anyone interested should contact Tony Lawson, Faculty of Economics and Politics, Sidgwick Site, Cambridge, CB3 9DD, UK.

The Post Keynesian Economics Study Group in London is providing a prominent forum for the discussion of methodological issues. Papers presented in the first three meetings this year include ‘Optimisation and Evolution: Winter’s Critique of Friedman Revisited’ (Geoff Hodgson), ‘Keynes on the Socialisation of Investment’ (John Davis), ‘Realism, Closed Systems and Economic Analysis’ (Tony Lawson), ‘Questions for Kaleckians’ (Ian Steedman), ‘Kahn and Keynes: The Making of the General Theory’ (Geoff Harcourt), ‘Financial Capital, Real Capital and Equi-Profit Equilibrium’ (Mike Lawlor) and ‘Living without Equilibrium’ (Peter Allen). Information about future meetings (which run at about two per term) can be obtained from Victoria Chick, Department of Political Economy, University College London, London WC1 0BT, UK, or Philip Arestis, Department of Applied Economics, Polytechnic of East London, Longbridge Road, Dagenham Essex, RM8 2AS, UK.

Jochen Runde
Girton College, Cambridge
Conference News

IAREP/SASE Conference
A Conference on Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Economic Problems will be held by the International Association for Research in Economic Psychology and the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics, 16-19 June 1991.

First International Conference of the European Association for Bioeconomic Studies
This E.A.B.S. conference on “Entropy and Bioeconomics” will be held in Rome, 28-30 November 1991. There will be four sections as follows:
1. New Approaches to the Epistemology of Sciences
2. Interdisciplinary Relations between Natural and Social Sciences
3. The Impact of Technology on Social-Economic and Ecological Life
4. Bioeconomics and Ecological Economics

Special guest Professor R.M. Goodwin from the Universities of Cambridge and Siena will deliver a lecture on “Chaos and Economics” in the opening session on Thursday, 28 November.

Papers in any one of the four sections are called for. Please contact – Korinna Müller Secretary General, E.A.B.S. 11 Via Larga I-20122 Milan Italy

SASE 1992 Conference: Call for Papers
The University of California at Irvine will host the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE) fourth annual meeting 27-29 March, 1992. SASE is a non-partisan organization devoted to interdisciplinary alternatives to neoclassical economics. If you wish to prepare a session, write to us with your proposal. Others interested in participating must contact session chairpersons directly. For a list of chairpersons, write to SASE at the address below.

“Do we approach economic and business issues as rational decision makers seeking to maximize our own self interest?... Can we act solely as individuals or are we usually influenced by the community around us?... How do we react to changes in our government’s economic policy?” We will be addressing these questions and other issues including business ethics, theoretical analyses, empirical studies, and the psychological, sociological, and political aspects of our economic, and more generally, choice behavior.

The members of the 1992 Conference Program Committee include: Shawn Rosenberg, University of California; Arnaud Sales, University of Montreal; Beat Burgemeier, University of Geneva; Ismail Serageldin, The World Bank; Barbara Heyns, New York University; Leon Lindberg, University of Wisconsin; Thomas Donaldson, Georgetown University; Mark Lutz, University of Maine; Richard Schweder, University of Chicago; and John Wilson, Bank of America.

SASE, founded in 1989 at the Harvard Business School, has a membership of over 800 economists, business people, policy makers, and scholars. We are currently preparing for our 16-19 June, 1991 conference in Stockholm, Sweden. SASE members receive invitations to these conferences and other workshops, our periodic newsletter, a discount subscription to the Journal of Socio-Economics, and other benefits. To encourage broad participation, annual dues are only $24.

For more information on the Irvine conference or on the SASE in general, please write to SASE, 714H Gelman Library, 2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20052 or call (202) 994-8167.

1990-91 Office Holders:
President: Daniel Yankelovich
President Elect: David Sears
Vice-President: Jane Mansbridge
Founder and Former President: Amitai Etzioni

ISINI: Call for Papers
After its successful First World Congress at the Sorbonne in Paris, France (August, 1990) where over 100 members participated, the International Society for Intercommunication of New Ideas (ISINI) is organizing its Second
World Congress in Athens, Greece, to be held on 29 June - 2 July, 1992.

The major themes and discussions will be on:

1. Problems of Transition from Socialism to a Free Market Economy via a capitalistic or a social democratic road.

2. On the Concept and Systems of Equilibrium (Stable or Unstable) and Disequilibrium (Minor or Major) in Economics, Social and Natural Sciences.

3. The European Community, the Position of the US Dollar, the Japanese Yen and New Problems for the World Economy.

4. Problems of Progress, Poverty, Instability and the Indebtedness of the Third World Countries.

5. A Re-Examination of the Structure and Functions of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

For participation in the Congress in Athens, Greece, please write to:

Prof. Emeritus Lazaros Houmanidis
Chairman of ISINI Congress
5-7 Gregory V Amouroussion
Athens 15122
Greece

For new membership, write to ISINI, 145 Moss Hill Road, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, USA.
Publication News

International Review of Economics and Finance

IREF is a new journal to be published by the JAI Press in 1991. This journal publishes original theoretical/empirical articles on all aspects of economics and finance. It is a blind refereed publication which also contains a book review section.

Authors of articles that fit the scope of IREF are invited to send their manuscripts, in triplicate, to the editors.

Editors: Hamid Beladi (Economics) and Carl R. Chen (Finance)
University of Dayton, USA

Address: International Review of Economics and Finance
University of Dayton
300 College Park
Dayton, Ohio 45469-2212, USA

Telephone No. (513) 229-3073
Fax No. (513) 229-4000
Submission Fee: US$20.00

Review of Social Economy

For the one-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the Principles of Alfred Marshall, the Review of Social Economy devotes a special issue (No. 4, Vol. XLVIII, Winter 1990) on the thinking of this great economist entitled “The Social Economics of Alfred Marshall” edited by Professor Hans E. Jensen of the University of Tennessee.

Papers Received


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- Area Correspondent

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John Lodewijks
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Call for Contributions

The next issue of this bulletin will be published in December 1991. We call for formal and informal contributions in the general area of economic methodology.

The deadline for submission is the end of September 1991.

Please send papers or direct enquiries to:
Dr. Victor Mok
Department of Economics
Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, N.T.
Hong Kong.
Fax: (852) 311 4763

Area Correspondents Wanted

With a view to expanding its list of area correspondents, the Network cordially invites volunteers from its members in particularly the following countries/regions: the USSR, Japan, and India. If you are interested to be one of the Network’s area correspondents, please write to the Secretary, International Network for Economic Method, 179 Jaffe Road, Suite 202, Hong Kong.

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