

Introduction to RWER issue 100

This journal began by accident. In the summer of 2000, I was “surfing the web” when I clicked onto a French site called Autisme-économie. It told how French students had launched a rebellion against the obsolescence of their economics curriculum. *Le Monde* and other French newspapers carried articles about the students’ complaints, and France’s minister of education promised to investigate.

A week later I was at a small non-mainstream economics conference in Cambridge, UK. Half the conferees were from the States, and their table conversations repeatedly turned on the increasing efforts of their economics departments to purge non-believers like themselves by eliminating from the curriculum both economic history and the history of economic thought. Twice, at different tables, I tried to insert a glimmer of hope by telling of the attention-getting success of the French students. But they were incredulous and blanked me from their conversation.

That lowered my spirits a bit. But on the final evening Geoffrey Harcourt, the after-dinner speaker, lifted them. He did so partly because he repeatedly made us laugh, and partly because he recalled the long struggle and eventual partial victory in bringing macro into economics’ conceptual framework. But Harcourt wasn’t boasting; he was merely pointing to his generation’s success at diminishing the hold of ideology and pseudo-science on economics to encourage us to achieve the same only more so.

The next morning heading home on a train, the combination of the dining-table snubs and Harcourt’s inspiring speech caused me to get out a pad of paper and, as I sometimes do, start writing for therapy. In the style of yellow journalism and with a heathen non-French economist as my imaginary reader, I wrote an account of the Autisme-économie happenings. When I got home, I translated and added some quotes from French newspapers, pretended that what I had written was the first issue of a newsletter, typed it all up, and read it a couple of times. Therapy finished.

But a few nights later, with the bottle of chianti on my desk half-empty, I got carried away. I had a list of the email addresses of the Cambridge conferees which when added to my list of economist contacts came to a total of 99. I opened an anonymous email account, stuck my therapy writing and the 99 addresses into an email and clicked SEND. A week later [my fantasy](#) had over a hundred subscribers.

Now, after 22 years and with Jamie Morgan as my co-editor, it continues. But with an enormous difference. Fears that were in the background then are now in the foreground. Natural science and the daily news inform us that the continuation of free societies, civilization, and maybe the human species are all now at risk as tipping points are neared. The same sources tell us that the cause of these rapid movements towards ultimate disasters is **THE ECONOMY**. Not economies in general, but the global economy that has been created and maintained since World War Two under the guidance of the teachings of traditional economics, i. e. Economics 101.

Just as Copernicus’s description of the universe was subversive of the traditional or then mainstream view of the universe, the 19 papers I have chosen from *Real-World Economics Review* archives for this

100th issue are subversive of the traditional view of the economy. The primary basis of their subversion is that they view the economy within a **bi-directional causal context** and, compared to traditional economics, **an infinitely larger one**. Most especially, they see **a two-way interdependency running between the economy and the biosphere and between the economy and society**. Keynes' introduction of macro greatly widened the possible view of causality in economics, but his expansion of economics' conceptual framework was tiny by comparison to what is now required if **economists** are not to continue to lead humanity toward ultimate catastrophe.

Thank you, Dear Readers, for all your support through the years. And not only for your submissions, but also for spreading the word.

Edward Fullbrook