

## **To Be a Heterodox Economist: The Contested Landscape of American Economics, 1960s and 1970s**

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What was it like to be a heterodox economist in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s? First, with the decline of McCarthyism and the rise of the civil rights and anti-war movements, it was now possible to become a heterodox economist and even find a teaching position without being immediately fired. But the possibility of existence brought with it a contested environment in which neoclassical economists attempted to keep the heterodox at bay. So in this contested environment, what was it like? Although there are various reminiscences scattered in books, journals, and biographical dictionaries of heterodox economists and incomplete tales of individual daring and damning are passed around the community of heterodox economists, an overall view of what it was like remains elusive. This article is an attempt to partially answer the question. Thus, it starts with a brief description of the hegemony of neoclassical economics and the general attitude of neoclassical economists toward heterodox economics and economists. A more detailed inquiry follows into the bullying of, harassment of, and discrimination against inquisitive, open-minded graduate students and young heterodox professors by mainstream economists. The first part concludes that "life among the econ tribe" for heterodox economists was often short (for ostracism was widely practiced) and difficult and brutish for the survivors. The second part of the article examines the efforts by heterodox economists to build heterodoxy, focusing on localized efforts to create supportive academic and social environments. In particular, the efforts to make heterodox economics major, minor, or field components in Ph.D. programs are documented.

By 1970 there were over 15,000 American economists, most of whom were neoclassical economists and belonged to the American Economic Association (AEA). Because of the repressive dominance of neoclassical economists and because of the pre- and

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post-war repression of heterodox economics and economists, neoclassical economists shared membership in a tightly knit community.<sup>1</sup> This community accepted a single, relatively homogeneous body of ideas or theories, shared the same set of standards—*theoretical, technical, and empirical*—for evaluating research and publications, engaged in a network of interinstitutional and interpersonal ties that promoted communication, reciprocated employment and conference participation opportunities, and rejected or suppressed all else. Indicative of this prior to 1970 was the near total absence of Ph.D.-granting economic departments that offered fields in social economics, institutional economics, or political economy (that is, radical-Marxist economics) or that incorporated heterodox economic theory directly into their core theory courses, with the University of Texas-Austin perhaps being the exception.<sup>2</sup>

The homogeneous nature of the body of theory held by the neoclassical community was clearly revealed in a survey of the present state of economics published in 1970 (Ruggles 1970a). In the survey, the discipline was defined in terms of understanding how the economy operated; and, by completely ignoring the existence of heterodox economic theory, this understanding was conceived solely in terms of the mechanisms by which scarce resources were allocated, prices were determined, income was distributed, and economic growth took place. Moreover, it was argued the economic theory that delineated this understanding provided much of the unity of the discipline. And within economic theory, it was microeconomic theory that was the central core on which economics as a whole was based. Finally, it was argued that

[t]he acquisition of this understanding has been cumulative, and there now exists a well-established core of economic theory and an economic accounting framework which provides the economist with his basic working tools. (Ruggles 1970b, 11)

The survey faithfully reported the existing consensus among neoclassical economists as to what constituted economics and the usual standards of honest, unbiased scientific work. Thus, any negative criticism in terms of not examining important and pressing social-economic problems, of the esoteric-irrelevant nature of economic theory and its mathematical models, and of the conservative bias of neoclassical economic theory and neoclassical economists or suggestions that economics needs to be completely rebuilt on a different theoretical foundation was met with forceful, denigrating rebuttals, snide comments (such as that critics rarely seem to do any real research), and the claim that nearly all was right with economics. Although there were individual exceptions, as a community, it is not surprising that neoclassical economists felt that heterodox economists had a faulty understanding of neoclassical economic theory, were technically deficient and had theories technically inferior to neoclassical theory, and held ideologically slanted political and social values that led them to accept outdated and erroneous theories and at the same time prevented them from understanding how markets really worked and from doing any real research.

Of course the irony of this attitude was that the concurrent capital controversy showed that neoclassical economists had a faulty understanding of their own theory. In fact, by the late 1960s, neoclassical economists seemed to be very much on the defensive as graduate students were asking them impolite questions such as “please define capital” and they resented it. Hence, it is also not surprising they would lash out, as did Martin Bronfenbrenner, stating that heterodox theory lacked scientific rigor and was nonquantifiable, while heterodox economists “pandered to the prejudices and abilities of dumbbells, who can’t understand any other variety” (1973, 5). But he was not the only economist doing this. For example, in a letter to Joan Robinson informing that her submission on the capital controversy to the *Journal of Political Economy* was rejected, Harry Johnson stated that the Cambridge England school deliberately or unwittingly did not understand the neoclassical model of general equilibrium. He further claimed that their critique of neoclassical general equilibrium theory and proposed replacement with Piero Sraffa’s “production of commodities by means of commodities” help perpetuate the myth that Marxism was a scientific subject and not an emotional religious movement. Finally, he proposed that Robinson should submit her paper to a journal for the amateur intellectual or to an obscure journal whose readers would not have heard of the Cambridge controversies (Heilbroner 1970; Eagley 1974; Ruggles 1970b; Leontief 1971; Schultze 1971; Gurley 1971; Olson and Clague 1971; Tobin 1973; Lindbeck 1977; Bronfenbrenner 1970 and 1973; Solow 1970a, 1970b, 1971; Reder 1982; Lebowitz, personal communication, March 12, 2002; and Johnson 1971).

Thus, if heterodox economists and the mush they called theories were to be taken seriously, neoclassical economists argued, they would have to become more neoclassical in language, technique, theorizing, and style; and if they refused, then their tenure as academic economists should be brought to an end and as a result their theoretical mush would deservedly disappear from economics. Given this intellectual climate, by not accepting the terms offered and, at the same time, persisting in developing an alternative theory, open-minded, inquisitive economic graduate students (heterodox or not) as well as outright heterodox economists faced intellectual bullying, hostility, and rejection, if not outright reprisals in terms of fewer academic appointments, limited tenure and promotion prospects, fewer publications, and denial of access to sessions at the annual conference of the AEA. One well-known case of harassment of radical graduate students occurred at Columbia in 1970 when an uninvited Harold Barger attended a course taught by Lawrence Tharp. In addition, while teaching at MIT as an assistant professor circa 1970, Duncan Foley mentioned to a senior colleague that the Pareto criterion was irrelevant to real political debate, and his colleague’s response was that if Foley really believed that he should get out of economics. Then there were also the not-so-well-known cases of Bard College firing Laurence Shute in 1966 for his radicalism and Occidental College not renewing Edward Shaffer’s contract because of his opposition to the Vietnam War and the kind of economics he taught.

It should be noted that neoclassical economists often deny that these events took place in the 1960s and early 1970s. However, in the disciplines of history, political science, and sociology the old guard acted precisely the same way toward their radicals, calling them amateurs and intellectually ill prepared and unfit to be teaching in a university. Hence they were denied tenure and/or outright fired. In short, economics was not an isolated case; rather the attitudes and behavior of neoclassical economists was no different from their conservative-mainstream colleagues in other disciplines or from conservative-minded administrators who attempted to fire communist academics or academics involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Finally, it should be noted that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) responded to the rise of radicalism and Marxism in the academic community by investigating the radical academic caucuses and cooperating with universities (such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in matters of faculty appointments and promotions through providing information on the subversive-radical nature of the candidates (Tharp 1970; Arestis and Sawyer 2000; Foley 1999; Shute, personal communication, March 28, 2002; Keen 1999; *Newsletter for Intellectual Freedom*, November 1969, 93, January 1970, 6, November 1971, 128, March 1973, 37, and July 1975, 111; Shaffer 2004; Edward H. Shaffer, personal communication, May 10, 2002; and Diamond 1992.)

In spite of the changing social and political environment (which lessened relative to the 1950s the repressive atmosphere) and the rise of the New Left in the 1960s, American economic departments largely maintained an antiradical, antiprotest feeling alongside a pro-free enterprise position. In particular, unlike professors in English, philosophy, history, and other disciplines, most economists did not become involved in civil rights and antiwar activities on campus. Rather it would seem that they accepted to some degree the anti-civil rights, anticommunism rhetoric that permeated society at large. Moreover, they believed that neoclassical economic theory and its applications to the real world should be accepted by students without question or discussion. However, some students found it sterile and innately conservative. So they doubted and questioned the theory only to be slapped down by the professor with denigrating phrases, such as “perhaps you should study neoclassical theory and learn it thoroughly before you criticize it” or “if you continue to have these doubts about the theory, perhaps you should drop out of economics.” Undaunted by the intolerant atmosphere in the classroom, they searched elsewhere for readings and syllabi in economics that would be fresher and more challenging than the one they were using. They found Paul Sweezy and the *Monthly Review*; and the Marxist organizations contacted were happy to respond. But these efforts did not undermine the restricted approach to economics presented in the theory classes. These conservative and intolerant attitudes held by neoclassical economists in nearly all economic departments (and in the neoclassical community at large) toward doubts, criticisms, and the movement combined with the dominance of neoclassical economic theory in terms of teaching, research, and disciplinary status made it difficult for radical-Marxist, social, and institutional economists to obtain academic

appointments in the period of high demand for academic economists the 1960s to the mid 1970s, especially at Ph.D.-granting institutions.

Even before trying to obtain teaching positions, potential heterodox economists faced a hostile academic environment where administrators (prompted perhaps by the FBI) and most faculty viewed them as possible disrupters and believed that they would use their teaching positions to indoctrinate students in one particular viewpoint, use political tests for hiring and granting tenure and promotion, and use the university to promote a political agenda. The depressing irony that this was precisely what universities and mainstream academic economists had been doing for the entire twentieth century and especially since 1945 was not lost on them. This discriminatory and hostile environment was for radical academics and heterodox economists in particular captured in the pity phrase “two radical academics is one too many and one heterodox economist is one too many.” In addition, heterodox economists trying to obtain teaching positions for the first time also had particular problems because the institutions to which they were applying would receive letters of recommendation saying that they were troublemakers. For example, circa 1965 after universities received his reference letters, Michael Lebowitz did not get second interviews because one of them stated that he was a nonconformist in attire and politics (personal communication, March 12, 2002).

But even if heterodox economists obtained appointments (as some economic departments were not averse to hiring Marxist-radical economists as long as they utilized acceptable methodology, that is, mathematics, in their research), they generally faced harassment, received warnings about engaging in political activities, and, in any case, were often denied re-appointments and/or tenure, an outcome that frequently occurred in other academic disciplines as well. One example of harassment (and bullying) is found in a letter E. Kay Hunt sent to Joan Robinson:

My leftist views and my strong views on the capital controversy have created strong opposition to my tenure. One senior professor in our department (Carl Uhr) has publicly made the statement that anyone “who takes the Robinson-Sraffa view on the capital controversy deserves tenure only in the state mental hospital.” (1972)

Hunt did, however, receive tenure. But a woman economist, especially a heterodox woman economist, would not be so lucky. Women economists were in general discriminated against. Moreover, when considered for tenure, the decision could have easily included sexual fantasies about her body, as did occur in other disciplines. In addition, heterodox female economists had a greater chance of being denied tenure than heterodox male economists, even in departments where the latter were present.

The most publicized event with regard to reappointment and tenure occurred at Harvard when in 1972 its economics department denied tenure to Sam Bowles and reappointment to Arthur MacEwan, with the result that, by 1974, four of its five radical economists had left. The radical economist who remained was Stephen Marglin, who obtained tenure before getting interested in and identified with radical economics. The

other two radical economists who left were Tom Weisskopf (who left in 1972 to take a tenure position at the University of Michigan) and Herbert Gintis (who never had a tenure-track position and left in 1974 to take a tenure position at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst). This event was accompanied by undergraduate and graduate students' complaints of the absence of courses taught from a radical or Marxist perspective. Although the department listened to them, it refused to act on the complaint. Similar events occurred at Yale University, where in 1969–70 Stephen Hymer was allegedly refused tenure and promotion after he made a public commitment to Marxism; at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where in 1972 Michael Best was allegedly denied reappointment because he was not an economist with promise since he intended to publish in the *Review of Radical Political Economics*; at San Diego State College, where in 1973 Peter Bohmer was allegedly fired for being a radical economist; at Idaho State University, where in 1973 Ron Stanfield was allegedly not re-appointed solely because of his radical views; at San Jose State University, where in May 1974 three heterodox economists—David Landes, Gayle Southworth, and Andy Parnes— were replaced by four conservative neoclassical economists and Douglas Dowd was continually threatened with dismissal by its president; at St. Mary's College, where in 1974 Eugene Coyle was allegedly denied tenure for not teaching traditional microeconomics in the usual uncritical manner; at University of Massachusetts-Boston, where in 1975 Paddy Quick's contract was allegedly not renewed because of her political activities; and at Stanford in 1975, when Foley was allegedly denied tenure because of his growing interest and research in Marxian economics.<sup>3</sup>

Harassment, red-baiting, discrimination, and exclusion of established and/or tenured heterodox economists by their neoclassical colleagues, conservative administrators, and groups outside the university also occurred. An example of the latter is the John Birch Society threatening W. Robert Brazelton, a heterodox economist at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, for teaching about the USSR in his comparative systems course. The threat was credible enough for police protection to be supplied. But in general most of it took place within the department in the form of limiting the possibility of teaching heterodox economic material to undergraduate and graduate students. In particular, since 1945, history of thought, economic history, and labor economics were courses in which undergraduate and graduate students were introduced to radical-heterodox issues and theories. As a result, departments often eliminated courses in history of economic thought and economic history from the course offerings, often prevented heterodox economists from teaching economic theory courses, and either blocked or attempted to block the introduction of heterodox courses and/or a specialized field in heterodox political economy (or the common euphuism of "alternative approaches" preferred by mainstream economists) into the undergraduate and graduate programs. As for labor economics, starting in the 1950s successful efforts were made to marginalize contributions from institutional economists and the imperfect competition/non-market-clearing paradigm of John Dunlop, Clark Kerr, Richard Lester, Lloyd Reynolds, and

the Cambridge Group. In their place was substituted a neoclassical perfect competition market-clearing approach that turned labor economics into a branch of applied neoclassical microeconomics. This is best seen in the transformation of labor economics at Wisconsin from an institutional to a neoclassical approach between 1957 and 1970, resulting in the complete cleansing of the former and the complete hegemony of the latter. Moreover, in some cases when a field in heterodox economics or “alternative approaches” was established, the neoclassical faculty introduced additional conditions for students who wanted to do the field, such as demonstrating competency in neoclassical theory beyond the first-year comprehensive examinations (without a reciprocal requirement being placed on those doing the field in economic theory). The intention of such (and similar) discriminatory requirements was to destroy the heterodox field and/or to prevent graduate students from specializing in heterodox theory—as did occur at Yale University and Rutgers University.

In other cases, departments simply discriminated against students who took heterodox fields when allocating teaching and research assistantships. An interesting example of this was the Cornell economics department efforts to prevent graduate students from participating in the special field called the “Program in Participation, and Labor Managed Systems.” When initially started, the program was fairly mainstream in terms of method and theory, but by the end of the 1970s it had become interdisciplinary, eclectic, and pluralistic-heterodox in method and theory as well as critical of neoclassical theory. This was due in part to solidaristic-oriented graduate students becoming involved in the program. To curb this eclectic-heterodox interest of its graduate students, the economics department used its power of the allocation of assistantships (with tuition waiver and support) backed by a Chicago-style qualifying exam process to determine eligibility for the assistantships and carried out a negative campaign against the program to ensure that no assistantship was given to a graduate student interested in the program. Given such discriminatory and vehement opposition to the program, it is not surprising that the department eventually eliminated it.<sup>4</sup> There were also whispering campaigns to direct students away from heterodox economists and their courses, biased promotion panels to block advancement, and favoritism in the allocation of department resources.<sup>5</sup>

Outside the department, heterodox economists faced discrimination against their research and their writings. Quite bluntly, for example, research proposals submitted to the National Science Foundation were summarily rejected as not dealing with economics with a reminder that NSF money was only for neoclassical economists. As for their writings, papers critical of core tools, models, and discourse of neoclassical economic theory or challenging the findings of prominent neoclassical economists stood less and less of a chance of being published in mainstream journals. Moreover, papers whose heterodox topics were not of interest to neoclassical economists or whose style was literary also stood little chance of being accepted by mainstream journals. This was made clear by George Borts in his 1980 report as the managing editor of the *American Economic Review*. Borts noted that not many heterodox papers were submitted to the journal over

the previous decade and most of those were rejected because they were not of high quality and because his referees, who did not approve of heterodox economics, did not want to allocate journal space to heterodox articles. A case in point was the rejection of Anwar Shaikh's 1973 paper on the transformation problem on the grounds that it was unsuitable for the *Review*. Borts' solution to the issue was that heterodox economists should just publish in their own journals. Consequently, most heterodox economists eventually did not bother to submit their papers to neoclassical journals. Finally, the program of the annual conference of the AEA at the annual meeting of the Allied Social Science Associations was arranged by the president-elect, as opposed to being derived from an open call for papers. This meant that it was not possible for "outsiders" to have sessions at the annual conference unless the president-elect invited them. As this rarely happened, by the late 1960s heterodox economists felt increasingly discriminated against and hence increasingly excluded from the annual conference (Lazonick 1973; URPE 1972, 1973a, 1973b, 1973c, 1973d, 1974a, 1974b, and 1975; Christiansen 1974; Lipset and Riesman 1975; Lifshultz 1974; Ron Stanfield, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Walsh 1978; Foley 1999; Tarascio 1999; *AIMS Newsletter*, vol. 1.3 (November-December 1965), 4–7; Michael Lebowitz, personal communication, March 12, 2002; Dowd 1974, 1997; Fustfeld 1997; Aslanbeigui and Choi 1997; Stimpson 2000; Kaufman 2001, 2002; Boyer and Smith 2000; Cain 1993; Shackelford 2002 and personal conversation [October 2, 2002]; Barber 1997; Aslanbeigui and Naples 1997; Shepherd 1995; Johnson 1971; Arestis and Sawyer 2000; Michael Bernstein, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Robert Blecker, personal communication, February 11, 2002; David Bunting, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Charlie Rock, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Soma Golden, "Radical Economics under Fire," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1975, section 3, 1–2; Paddy Quick, personal communication, March 2, 2002; Paul Davidson in King 1995; The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973a, 1973b, 1973c; Eugene Coyle, personal communication, February 23, 2002; Bob Loube, personal communication, January 6, 2003; Borts 1981; and Shaikh 1973).

In short, "life among the econ tribe" for heterodox economists circa 1970 was far more difficult and brutish than Axel Leijonhufvud could ever imagine and often short, for ostracism was frequently practiced by the tribal elders and their supporters. More strongly, this concerted campaign against the very existence of heterodox economics and heterodox economists can be viewed as institutionalized pathological behavior since the number of Ph.D. programs in the 1970s with a heterodox component of any discernable sort numbered less than 25 of the 120 that existed and with a major heterodox component numbering less than 10—see table 1 and the discussion below. Moreover, since the total number of Ph.D.'s in economics awarded by the "major" and "minor" heterodox programs was less than 5 percent and 15 percent respectively of the 8,552 Ph.D.'s in economics and econometrics awarded from 1971 to 1980 and since not all graduates of these programs were heterodox economists, it is quite likely that the

**Table 1. Economics Ph.D. Programs with a Major Heterodox Component, 1970–1980**

University	Fields					URPE Chapter	Ph.D. Graduates 1971–1980
	Political Economy	Institutional Economics	Social Economics	Post Keynesian Economics	Radical-Marxian Economics		
American	x					x	20
Colorado State-Fort Collins			x			x	58
UC-Riverside	x	x	x			x	35
UM-Amherst	x						29
New School	x					x	46
Notre Dame	x						53
Rutgers				x	x		59
Texas	x	x	x			x	55

Sources: Owen and Glahe 1974; Owen and Antoine 1977; Owen 1979; Owen and Cross 1982; Stanfield 2002; Swaney 2002; Brazer 1982; Bernstein 2002; and Rosser 2002.

total number Ph.D.’s awarded to heterodox economists was no more than 5 percent. With such small numbers, why would neoclassical economists care—except for religious intolerance (Leijonhufvud 1981; Owen and Glahe 1974; Owen and Antoine 1977; Harmon 1978; Owen 1979; Owen and Cross 1982; and Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Reports 1987 and 1996–2000)?

The contested landscape of American economics did not consist solely of the efforts of neoclassical economists to suppress the threat of heterodoxy. There were positive efforts in the 1970s to build heterodoxy, such as the ongoing efforts by heterodox economists to build and expand the activities of the Union for Radical Political Economics (URPE) and Association for Evolutionary Economics as well as the efforts to revive and develop the Association for Social Economics and in 1979 the formation of the Association for Institutional Thought in 1979. Moreover, there was in the 1970s the sustained effort by Post Keynesian economists to build Post Keynesian economics. Finally, there was in the 1970s a wide range of localized efforts by heterodox professors and graduate students in economic Ph.D. and M.A. programs to create, in one way or another, a friendly and supportive academic and social environment in which to study heterodox economics, teach heterodox economics, and do research in heterodox economics.<sup>6</sup>

Directing our attention to these latter efforts, one outcome was to have heterodox economics as a major component of the graduate program. This was achieved at the eight departments shown in table 1 by similar means. That is, with the exception of Texas,<sup>7</sup> in each case, the major impetus came from the heterodox economists, sometimes supported by the university administration (as at Amherst and Rutgers) and not vigorously opposed (and perhaps even supported) by the nonheterodox economists. In some cases, the Ph.D. program was directly altered (as at New School, Amherst, and Notre Dame), in which heterodox economics became part of the core theory courses. In

others (such as at Rutgers) a cohort of heterodox economists, courses, and graduate students was built up before a heterodox field was established. Finally, there were cases, such as University of California-Riverside, where the initial efforts were directed at establishing a field in, say, political economy, which comprised two or three courses taught by two or three heterodox economists. But over time the number of heterodox economists increased as well as heterodox course offerings generally outside the field. In all cases, with the increase in the number of heterodox economists, heterodox courses, and graduate students interested in heterodox economics, its role in the graduate program became more secure and pervasive.<sup>8</sup> This, in turn, led to more academic and social activities that made the departments with their graduate programs an exciting place to do heterodox economics. As a result, heterodox economics became a major and relatively secure component of these eight Ph.D. economic programs by 1980 (Lifshultz 1974; Walsh 1978; O'Hara 1999; Lee 2000; Colander 2001; URPE 1971, 1972, 1973c, and 1978b; Phillips 1989, 1994, and 1995; Sherman 1984 and 2003; Ron Stanfield, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Hamilton 2004; and James Swaney, personal communication, February 11, 2002).<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the eight heterodox economic programs, there were thirteen more departments in the 1970s in which heterodox economics formed a minor component of their Ph.D. programs—see table 2. Some departments (such as Oklahoma, Maryland, and Utah) had from the 1950s a number of heterodox economists and a pluralistic ethos, while other departments (such as Tennessee) amassed a cadre of heterodox economists and a pluralistic ethos in the 1960s. Thus, although the programs did not have a

**Table 2. Economics Ph.D. Programs with a Minor Heterodox Component, 1970–1980**

University	Fields					URPE Chapter	Ph.D. Graduates 1971–1980
	Political Economy	Institutional Economics	Social Economics	Post Keynesian Economics	Radical-Marxian Economics		
Columbia	x						139
Connecticut	x	x					47
UC-Berkeley	x					x	171
Maryland		x	x				83
Michigan	x					x	162
Nebraska		x					56
New Hampshire	x						6
Oklahoma							32
Stanford	x					x	152
Temple	x		x				28
Tennessee							39
Utah							
Yale	x					x	184

Sources: Owen and Glahe 1974; Owen and Antoine 1977; Owen 1979; Owen and Cross 1982; Stanfield 2002; Swaney 2002; Brazer 1982; Bernstein 2002; and Rosser 2002.

specific field in heterodox economics, various graduate courses had heterodox content. However, this resulted in heterodox economics only being a minor component in the programs. One interesting example of this is the history of heterodoxy at Utah. The origin of the heterodoxy started in the early 1950s when heterodox-Marxist economists Robert Edminister, Lawrence Nabers, and Ernest Randa left California for Utah because the latter did not require its faculty to sign an oath of allegiance. Later in the mid 1950s Sydney Coontz, who was a Marxist, joined the department; and in the mid 1960s Allen Sievers, who was a scholar of Marx and an ardent institutionalist, joined the department. Consequently, from the 1950s to 1980, the department and its graduate program was theoretically diverse, with some faculty being mainstream, others being some variety of institutionalism, and some being historically oriented economists sympathetic to various approaches to political economy. Thus while “antimainstream” was a significant theme of the graduate program and graduate students were introduced to sophisticated methodological and theoretical critiques of neoclassical economics, there was not a specific focus on heterodox economics. This changed in 1979 when the department restructured the graduate program and hired four Marxist economists: E. Kay Hunt, Peter Philips, Michael Carter, and Susan Carter. Since then, heterodox economics has become a major component in the department’s graduate program.

In other departments (such as University of California-Berkeley, Michigan, University of New Hampshire, Stanford, and Yale) graduate students (many of whom belonged to URPE and were members of the local URPE chapter) worked with a couple of heterodox faculty members to convince the relatively open-minded mainstream faculty to hire heterodox economists and establish a heterodox field comprising two or three courses. The existence of the field provided the catalyst for additional academic activities such as heterodox seminars, bringing in visiting heterodox economists, and heterodox doctoral dissertations as well as social activities. A good example of this was Stanford. Around 1972, the URPE chapter helped to establish a graduate field in “Alternative Approaches to Economic Analysis,” but there was only one tenure member of the department, John Gurley, to staff it. Additional pressure by the URPE chapter in 1974 to increase the staffing for the field correlated with Donald Harris getting tenure. The field consisted of three courses in the “history of economic thought,” “Marxian economics,” and “value, distribution, and growth.” In addition there was a very active seminar with presentations by faculty, by visiting professors such as Hyman Minsky, Paul Davidson, Alessandro Roncaglia, Alfredo Medio, Pierangelo Garegnani, and Krishna Bharadwaj, and by students who used it to hone their dissertation proposals. After the seminar, the participants went out to dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Moreover, many of the participants in the field often went to the seminars put on by the URPE chapter at Berkeley. Heterodox economists who took the field and participated in its extended activities included Steven Fazzari, Tracy Mott, Jane Knodell, Warren Whatley, Nilufer Cagutay, and Robert Blecker.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, beyond the twenty-one Ph.D. graduate programs with heterodox components, there were a number of Ph.D. programs with one or two courses in heterodox

economics, perhaps complemented by an URPE chapter, but otherwise heterodox economics was for the most part marginalized. For example, Harvard (Stephen Marglin) and Michigan State (Warren Samuels) offered a bi-annual course in political economy while Wisconsin offered a bi-annual course in institutional economics and had an URPE chapter. Moreover, the departments of agricultural economics at Michigan State (Allan Schmid) and Wisconsin (Don Kanel) supported institutionalist perspectives.<sup>11</sup> However, it should be noted that the presence of heterodox-institutional economics at Michigan State was pervasive, even if low keyed. Consequently, its impact on heterodox economics is frequently not recognized. And supplementing the three tiers of Ph.D. programs were at least ten M.A. programs that offered fields and courses in political economy, institutional economics, and social economics. The M.A. programs with institutionalist fields, courses, and/or ethos included California State University-Fresno, University of Missouri-Kansas City, North Texas State University, and the University of Denver. Other M.A. programs with a heterodox field, course, and/or ethos included De Paul University (social economics), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (political economy), St. Mary's University (social economics), Butler University (political economy), University of Nevada-Reno (political economy and social economics), and Roosevelt University (Post Keynesian economics and Marxism) (Brazelton 2004; Anne Mayhew, personal communication, February 16, 2002; Adams 1994; UPRE 1970, 1972, 1973c, 1974a, 1975, 1976, 1978a, and 1980; Clifford Poirot, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Al Campbell, personal communication, February 13, 2002; Hunt and Sievers, 2004; Blecker, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Steven Fazzari, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Michael Bernstein, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Tom Weisskopf, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Peter Fisher, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Schmid 2004; and James Sturgeon, personal communication, February 12, 2002).<sup>12</sup>

In spite of the contested landscape, the positive efforts to build heterodox economics in America were successful—whereas in 1965 there were the few, the isolated, the suppressed, by 1980 there existed national and regional heterodox organizations and conferences, Ph.D. and M.A. programs that trained heterodox economists, heterodox journals and publishers that published heterodox economics books, and an open social network of heterodox economists. Such a significant achievement was unknown in the history of economics and not duplicated in any other academic discipline. Thus, the emergence of heterodox economics as a relatively permanent contestant in American economics by 1980 was the reward to heterodox economists, faculty, and graduate students alike, who took the initial steps of breaking with the mainstream and thereby incurring its wrath in the hope of building a better economics.

### Notes

1. For a more extended discussion of the dominance of neoclassical economics in American economics in the twentieth century, the political and other forms of repression of heterodox

- economists from 1900 to 1960, and the near absence of Marxist, radical, and other heterodox economists in American universities from 1945 to 1970, see Lee (2002 and 2004).
2. There were differences between neoclassical economists over economic policies and the importance and relevance of particular tools and models; and these differences generated at times very strong emotional attitudes. But the differences were of second order importance, as they did not disrupt or break apart the neoclassical community.
  3. The harassment, discrimination, and exclusion directed at Marxist and other heterodox economists did not stop in 1975, as the case of Bertell Ollman in 1978 clearly indicated as well as the fact that David Landes did not obtain a full-time tenure track position again until 2001. Charges of corny theory and inadequate research, rejection for being a radical-socialist, a climate of fear and suppression, and the denial of tenure or nonrenewal of contract of radical-heterodox voices also continued unabated, as indicated by the cases of Gunnar Tomasson (Harvard University) and David Levine (Yale University) (Robert Blecker, personal communication, February 11, 2002; Gunnar Tomasson, personal communication, April 4, 2001; Richardson 1982; MARHO 1978; Schrecker 1979; and Eugene Coyle, February 23, 2002).
  4. However, its ethos continues in the International Association for the Economics of Participation.
  5. Some well-established academic economists such as Wassily Leontief objected to the methods used by economics departments to maintain intellectual orthodoxy, but they were ignored (Leontief 1982; Richard Du Boff, personal communication, February 11, 2002; and Soma Golden, "Harvard Economics Teaching Criticized," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1975, 1, 28).
  6. Similar efforts were made in Canadian universities, such as the nearly twenty-year effort, 1962 to 1980, by heterodox economists at the University of Manitoba to build a cohort of professors, establish heterodox courses, and establish an explicit department policy embracing methodological pluralism (Pentland 1977; Baragar 2004).
  7. Texas had a heterodox graduate program from as early as 1940, and it lasted into the 1970s. The combination of retirements and deans wanting a high-quality department (meaning the faculty must have doctorates from the best schools), meant that hires from the 1970s onward were nearly all neoclassical economists. Consequently, the Texas graduate program ceased to have any significant heterodox content by the 1980s.
  8. The interest of the graduate students in heterodox economics at these programs is in part indicated by the existence of URPE chapters (which comprised mostly of graduate students) at five of the universities.
  9. When administrative support and the number of heterodox economists decline combined with growing opposition from nonheterodox economists, even a well-entrenched heterodox component of a Ph.D. economics program with significant student support can be threatened (as happened at University of California-Riverside in the 1980s) or eliminated (as happened at Rutgers by 1988).
  10. Because existing faculty and graduate student interest were essential for establishing and maintaining the heterodox minor component in the Ph.D. programs of the thirteen departments, retirement and denial of tenure combined with nonreplacement, the drop in graduate student interest by the late 1980s, and pressure from mainstream faculty to limit the field meant that the institutionalist component of the graduate programs at Oklahoma, Maryland, and Tennessee disappeared in the 1980s and the 1990s while the heterodox fields at Michigan, Stanford, Berkeley, and Yale were abolished by the mid 1990s (Robert Blecker, February 11, 2002; Tom Weisskopf, February 11, 2002; and Michael Bernstein, personal communication, February 11, 2002).
  11. In fact, currently there is an effort to organize a "section" in institutional and behavioral economics within the American Agricultural Economics Association (George McDowell, personal communication, February 12, 2002).

12. Because of the absence of information regarding the efforts of heterodox economists at the level of solely M.A. programs, it is not possible to say whether this list is complete or not.

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