
Editorial

Tony Tinker

Baruch College at the City University of New York,
P.O. Box 12:225, One Bernard Baruch Way,
New York, NY 10010, USA
Email: Anthony.tinker@baruch.cuny.edu

Professor Tony Lowe's international travels are known but not well-documented. His most recent visit to Fiji and well-known but does not do justice to the full story.

In the 1960s, Professor Tony Lowe led a team, including Professors Tony Tinker, Dick Wilson and Richard Laughlin to West Africa, Nairobi Kenya to replace a Canadian contingent of professors who had run a doctoral program teaching Kenyan students. The problem with the Canadian program was that it perpetuated a typical colonial practice of dependence. The students never learned how to become teachers and researchers.

Professor Lowe introduced a new form of teaching: following the maxim, if you teach a student to fish then they become self-sufficient. The aim was to produce African student to earn a PHD and thereby become researchers and teachers. Professor Lowe and colleagues were housed in the Norfolk House (subsequently bombed by the Maw-Maw) and allowed and allowed to roam the game parks, un-chaperoned, over the weekends.

On one occasion, the English team's car ran into a herd of elephants. The giant male elephant felt his family threatened and began scraping his foot as a warning of a pending charge. Unfortunately, the car engine stalled. For a few tense moments, Professor Laughlin (the driver) struggled to re-start the car. Professor Lowe offered Laughlin, in a droll tone, a caution to allow time for the carburetor time to clear. The car started and we accelerated into a rapid exit.

Professor Lowe (while based at Leeds University) earned a Carnegie Fellowship to visit the USA. He visited Harvard, Carnegie and other US universities. It was during this trip that he found support for his 'new' managerialist Theory of the Firm, pioneered by Professor Herbert Simon (Carnegie University) and Professor's Bill Cooper and William Charnes. Simon eventually earned a Nobel Laureate for his work on the theories of the firm and William Cooper (probably the nearest thing we have had to an accountant) was later shortlisted for a Nobel Prize.

Professors Herbert Simon, Richard Cyert and James March's new theories of the firm contradicted the orthodox Neo-classical (market-based) theories of the firm. As elucidate by Professor Oliver Williamson, in his doctoral thesis, management discretion (not the market) served as the best explanation of firm behavior – see also Cyert, R. and March, J. (1963) *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, Prentice Hall, NJ.

Professor Lowe established this contra-thesis of economics with a new journal, *Managerial Economics* in the UK with a lecturer Mike Crew. This journal was eventually destroyed by the publisher Blackwell, who eventually sacked Crew and Lowe and replaced him by a new compliant editor, Professor Maurice Peston. This critical journal was destroyed by the mainstream apologist – the new editor Peston and the publisher, Blackwell.

Professor Tony Lowe was always a maverick economist. On returning to the UK, Lowe continued as an auto-didact (French phrase for a self-taught scholar). Professor Tony Lowe explored new versions of philosophy (social philosophy) cybernetics, and general systems theory. Lowe's Sheffield student/colleagues (Tinker, Laughlin and Wilson) pursued this original form of erudition that led stream of publications in Journals outside the traditional accounting mainstream. Lowe and Tinker began this development with two publications in Professor George Klir's *General Systems Journal*. Many more were to follow.