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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

Foreign Agricultural Trade: Selected Readings, Robert L. Tontz (Editor). Iowa State University Press, 1966, pp. XX, 500, \$U.S. 7.50.

The writings of some leading academic thinkers, research workers and trade practitioners on the subject of U.S. foreign agricultural trade have been assembled in this book. An overall picture of various aspects of trade, including the theoretical framework and how it may be improved, new viewpoints on trade policy, the pros and cons of various trade programmes, trade restrictions, trade stabilization agreements and the effectiveness of GATT in regard to trade expansion are given in this 500 page volume.

“The book is intended principally for use in college and university courses on the subject of foreign trade of U.S. farm commodities”. Because it presumes an understanding of the basics of economics and by its very nature this book will probably find its greatest use as a general reference rather than as a standard text book.

The 46 chapters, each chapter being contributed by a different author, are organized into five parts. Editorial comments at the head of each chapter provide continuity between the different readings and help to nullify some of the usual criticisms made against the selected-readings approach. However, this book is subject to some criticisms of duplication. This is particularly evident in the series of articles on P.L. 480 in Part II.

Part I, “Trade Theory and Policy”, as suggested by the title focuses on international trade theories and how trade is conducted in the real world. Two chapters by Jacob Viner and Gottfried Haberler question the validity of the classical theory of international trade. Subsequent chapters on U.S. trade policy (past and present), the E.E.C., U.N. Conference on Trade and Development and on international monetary considerations, including I.M.F., provide a sketchy, but adequate picture of the rationale, organization and methods by which international trade is conducted.

Part II entitled, “Trade Programmes Including Food for Peace Shipments”, begins with a chapter on the pattern of world agricultural trade. An excellent, well-balanced assessment of the effect of P.L. 480 on the U.S., recipient countries and third countries is perhaps the most useful section of this book and in all, embraces nine chapters.

Agricultural protection is discussed in Part III, “Trade Restrictions: Tariff and Nontariff Barriers”. The increasing emphasis on nontariff forms of protection, particularly with respect to agriculture, is assessed as one of the major obstacles to be encountered in the development of international trade.

The pros and cons of international commodity agreements are evaluated in Part IV which concludes with a chapter relating such agreements to the principles of GATT and particularly the Kennedy Round.

In the final Part, the aims, principles, machinery and achievements of GATT are assessed in terms of trade expansion and the conduct of international trade. All the writers generally agree that it has been a worthwhile organization.

Although primarily written for an American audience this book should prove a useful reference for Australians interested in international trade. A summary of the highlights of each chapter by the editor makes for easy and quick reference together with the index.

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Economic Development with Special Reference to East-Asia, Kenneth Berrill (Editor). London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1964. pp. 435, \$9.35 (Aust.).

This book is the published proceedings of the first conference of the International Economic Association to be held in South East Asia. However, in view of statistics presented and examples discussed, the book might more aptly be titled "Economic Growth of Underdeveloped Areas—with special reference to India and Japan."

The book contains eighteen papers collected into twelve chapters. These chapters are further aggregated into two parts: Part I, the first seven chapters, is concerned with "Factors Affecting Growth"; Part II is concerned with "Policies Affecting Growth".

"The purpose of the conference was to bring together economists concerned with growth and development who were working in the countries of East Asia, and to enable them to meet and discuss with a number of economists from outside the region interested in the same problems." This meeting of economists has resulted in a high standard of papers presented and of discussion on the papers. It has also resulted in a more accurate and less glamorous description of growth achievements than is often the case when authors not so concerned with directing and controlling growth have written about it. This is particularly true of Tachi's paper on the history of population and growth in Japan; he makes a point of mentioning that many possibilities could have altered the growth that Japan achieved.

The introduction is well written. It gives the reader a good summary of the contents of the book. The papers range in presentation from very theoretical and somewhat mathematical such as T. W. Swan's paper, "Of Golden Ages and Production Functions"—to papers which are mostly descriptive such as M. Tachi's "Labour, Population Trend and Economic Growth in Japan"—to papers such as that given by A. H. Adler in Chapter 9 which attempt to provide solutions to problems of policy in economic development.

Each chapter of the book concludes with a summary of the main points of discussion. This has the advantage of highlighting some of the more topical and controversial matters which are mentioned in the book. The book is an excellent reference for students of economic growth in underdeveloped areas and for those concerned with economic policy in underdeveloped areas. However, while many other people are

interested in economic development, this book can only be recommended as suitable for those trained in economics as there is frequent use of technical jargon.

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Twenty Six Centuries of Agrarian Reform: A Comparative Analysis,
Elias H. Tuma. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965. pp. viii, 309, \$U.S. 6.95.

The object of this interesting book is to evaluate land reform as a means of ameliorating the problems it is designed to solve. The aspect of land reform in which the author is most concerned is that of changes in land tenure. Professor Tuma examines the backgrounds, objects, processes and effects of ten planned reform movements in seven countries. He then evaluates them according to their objectives. The reforms studied are the Greek, Roman, French, Russian, Mexican, Japanese and Egyptian. For comparison, a study of the English tenure changes, an evolutionary process, is presented.

The background setting of all reform movements studied showed several common features, land tenure was primarily private and individual, ownership was concentrated, operation was small scale and the class structure was highly polemic with power concentrated. The implementation of reform was almost invariably triggered off by changes in economic organisation and class structure and by economic and political crises. The objectives of all planned reforms have been improved income distribution and political stability; twentieth century reforms have also been concerned with economic efficiency. The process of reform has been both revolutionary and non-revolutionary. The majority of reformers, the Soviet in notable exception, have compensated expropriated landowners. Almost all have modified their original objects in varying degrees. Their final effects on distribution and standard of living and on agricultural efficiency, except in the Soviet Union, have been quite small relative to the size of the problem. Most have achieved their short-term political objectives, the French and Soviet also were successful in their long-term political objectives. The result lead the author, in assessing the many and increasing reform movements afoot today, to the conclusion:—"Remembering that the landlords are not easy to convince, that the peasants are too poor and numerous to be satisfied easily, that a restless middle-class has been emerging at a high rate, and that impressive results have been obtained in socialist countries—remembering all that, can we depend on the limited effects of non-socialist reforms to solve these problems and avert revolution? A most optimistic answer can be only conditionally in the affirmative".

The analysis, given the methodology, is thorough, well documented and excellently presented. The chief difficulty of the book lies in its failure to relate the analysis to a well defined economic analytical framework. In consequence the reader is left to himself to work out relevant questions which arise. For example, can redistribution with compensation be expected, *a priori*, to improve to the distribution of income?

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