

Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik. *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture, and The World Economy, 1400 to the Present*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2006. Pp. 285. Paper \$22.95.

Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik, both Professors of History at the University of California, Irvine, argue that much of twentieth-century globalization goes back centuries. Divided into seven chapters, the book is organized by subject and in chronological order, starting from early modern markets to the present. Experts in Asian and Latin American history, the authors examine the role of violence in capital accumulation and market formation, private initiative as well as how crops such as coffee, tobacco, opium, potatoes, and corn became commodities in the international market place. This book introduces the origin of goods and services and offers a new economic approach to world history.

Pomeranz and Topik show how fifteenth-century China was affected by global trade by changing from paper and copper to silver currency. This not only changed the lives of the Chinese population but the lives of many remote people of five continents including indigenous people in Africa, Central and Southern America. The first step towards global trade came when the Chinese began trading silk to the British and the Dutch. These two groups relied on Spanish pesos that were minted by African slaves and mined by indigenous people in Mexico. This silver found its way east through Muslims and later Christians who purchased coffee and later reaching the rest of the world. At the same time, Pomeranz and Topik reveal that indigenous people were often not interested in European goods, leading Europeans to see the indigenous population as racially inferior, lazy, and uninterested in profit.

This book not only introduces the start of global trade and the effects it had in the fifteenth century, it also addresses today's most modern problems of globalization. Pomeranz and Topik introduce issues such as American global economic and cultural influence through Coca Cola and Oil. These topics illustrate that the global economy "required new international institutions and a conceptual revolution" (p. 175). Coca Cola created a new way of promoting trade by shifting the reference of groups, "convincing millions of European youth that the people they wanted to imitate were not their immediate peers, but healthy, coke drinking Americans" (p. 179). Topics like these in the last three chapters suggest that trade in the fifteenth century did not change contemporary world trade but helped to revolutionize and influence how trade is conducted today.

Covering more than six hundred years of global economic history, this book is an excellent choice as a textbook. In addition, its interdisciplinary approach is ideal for world history courses. Its engaging style also makes it enjoyable for the general reader. *The World that Trade Created* answers questions that we have rarely asked about the world. Readers will enjoy that economic history is presented in such a lively manner.

*Benito Ruacho, Jr.*