

engaging read. Implicitly, the approach derives from the Marxist approach to political economy – seeing the source of profit in work done by labour and emphasising the competitive forces shaping the uses of capital. However, it is open to discussion about different strategies by which organised labour and other progressive groups can seek political economic change. One chapter explores strategies for improving the capitalist system by striving for reforms directed at achieving a ‘high-investment, sustainable economy’, while another looks at on what it means to pursue a socialist alternative in the current era. In this way, tools for understanding the system and ‘de-mystification’ of economic theory are combined with an open-ended activist orientation. As Stanford puts it (p.338) ‘Workers and poor people only get as much from the economy as they are able to demand, fight for and win’.

J. E. King (Ed),

A Bibliographical Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Economists

Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2007, 337 pp.

John King has compiled a fine volume on 130 prominent economists, each of whom gets between one and five pages summarising their life and works. Particular emphasis is put on what has been their distinctive contribution, whether in academic economics or in the realm of practical economic policy-making. To qualify for inclusion, each economist had to be: (i) dead (‘to limit the size of the book and to avoid invidious comparisons among the living’); (ii) eminent (a more contentious criterion); and (iii) having made significant contributions in Australia or New Zealand (irrespective of nationality or place of birth). The entries are generally written to emphasise the positive features, sometimes reflecting close personal connections between author and subject (Geoff Harcourt on Eric Russell at the University of Adelaide or Warren Hogan on Colin Simkin at the University of Sydney, for example). Some of the entries are one-off contributions but other authors have contributed multiple entries: Alex Millmow penned 15, second only to editor John King’s personal contribution of 17. The descriptions of each economist’s work are informative, often given a little ‘personal touch’ by insights into

their life and times. Each entry is accompanied by a short list of key sources and references.

Taken as a whole, the book shows that Australasian economists have made substantial contributions, notwithstanding their peripheral location ‘down under’ and their relatively small numbers, compared with economists in Europe and North America. Some have been mainly focused on local concerns – the important role played by ‘Nugget’ Coombs in Australian ‘nation building’ after the second world war comes immediately to mind. Others have contributed to global economic knowledge – an obvious example being the contribution of New Zealander A. W. Phillips, originator of the renowned ‘Phillips curve’ that was later used for justifying monetary policies in ways of which he personally disapproved.

Ken Buckley

Buckley’s: Ken Buckley: Historian, Author and Civil Libertarian

A & A Publishing, 2008, 374pp, \$29.95 plus \$7 postage orders online at www.aampersanda.com,

This is a very interesting autobiography, completed by Ken Buckley just before he died, and steered into a handsome publication by his widow, Berenice. Justice Michael Kirby, who knew Ken well, contributes a characteristically charming and thoughtful introduction. Ken was on the staff of the Economic History department at the University of Sydney from the early 1950s until the 1980s. He worked closely with Ted Wheelwright who was in the Economics department there during the same three decades: they co-edited five volumes of *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism* and jointly wrote two volumes of what was intended to be a three volume work on Australian history from a labour perspective. Ken, like Ted, was involved in the struggle for political economy courses at the University, and there is an interesting chapter about that in the book.

Beyond the ‘groves of academia’ Ken was best known for his role in creating and steering the Council for Civil Liberties. Ken refers to the CCL as ‘my baby’ and many of the chapters in the book recount episodes from its development, its ups and downs, its relationship to the police,