
HISTORY OF ECONOMIC DOCTRINES

AN INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMIC THEORY

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HISTORY OF ECONOMIC DOCTRINES

TO
ALVIN JOHNSON,
A GREAT AND GOOD MAN
IN FRIENDSHIP

Preface

IN writing this book the author has concentrated rigorously on the one point that appears essential to him: to show the inward logic, revealed in retrospect, of the development of modern economic thinking and thereby to place the study of economic theory in its proper setting. His aim has been to contribute to systematic thinking on the historical problem. He is thereby led to a critical survey of, and introduction to, the entire field of economic theory. Although no special knowledge is presupposed, the argument is closely reasoned, and the reader must work out the logical connections for himself. In the few places in which reference is made to graphical representations, it will undoubtedly be found helpful to construct the curves described so that the explanation in the text may be followed.

Being a history of ideas rather than of authors, this book does not present material of a merely antiquarian or anecdotal interest. Only in exceptional cases of historical interest will biographical observations be made. Likewise, references will be made only to the books whose ideas are discussed. Therefore, it may be desirable for the reader to use the book in conjunction with one or another of the older, carefully documented books in the field, in which many interesting references and extensive quotations will be found. A list of the more important of these books is given at the end of this text.

This book and its author have greatly benefited by the advice of three friends. Alvin Johnson and Adolph Lowe read the manuscript and made a number of important critical observations; and Hans Neisser's suggestions on many points, big and small, based on his extraordinary knowledge of the literature, have been a major contribution.

The manuscript in its original form was even shorter than the book is now. Mr. Arthur Goodman found a middle way between the author's inclination towards the greatest possible succinctness and the desirability of making it easy reading. The author's gratitude is also due to the publisher, for his interest, patience, and help.

EDUARD HEIMANN

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