

Of course, plenty of scope remains for debate about the principles and practicalities of committing, as a society, to a SSE. Moving to a stable population is one of the more contentious aspects. From a political economic perspective, whether SSE is compatible with capitalism's inherent profit-seeking, capital-accumulating character is also necessarily a big issue. And the politics of getting from the unsustainable present to the desired future is a huge question. Daly's essays on these matters are worth reading not just for their clarity about the principles of SSE but as windows into what motivates a growing social movement to be concerned. Readers interested in connecting with that worldwide movement could contact the Centre for a Steady State Economy at <http://www.steadystate.org>

### **Bill Dunn**

#### **Neither Free Trade Nor Protection:**

#### **A Critical Political Economy of Trade Theory and Practice**

*Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2015, 227pp.*

Bill Dunn has established a strong reputation as an analyst of international and global economic issues with his previous books *Global Political Economy: a Marxist Critique* (Pluto Press, London, 2009) and *The Political Economy of Global Capitalism and Crisis* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2014). In this latest book he criticises the influential claims about the universal benefits of free trade and rival claims for blanket protection against the unfairness of trade. Rather, he says that international exchange needs to be seen in broader perspective by looking at its social, economic and historical context. He describes the standard 'free trade *versus* protection' dichotomy as an example of what Bordieu terms *doxy* or *doxa*, a conservative terrain of debate that pushes more important concerns from sight. He wants to bring back in the Marxian emphasis on production and to re-focus on the class, gender and ecological implications of trade. The latter implications do not loom large in the book, however, because its main concern is with an assessment of the currently dominant theories and policy stances. As such, it is a powerful critique. Dunn is particularly clear in explaining the history of

ideas about trade, presenting summaries and careful consideration of the posited arguments.

About halfway through the book there is a significant shift as it turns to the empirical evidence. International comparative data is presented on (1) trade and economic growth, (2) factor endowments, trade and growth, and (3) trade and economic inequalities. In each case the statistical evidence is notably underwhelming. This is not necessarily a weakness: on the contrary, negative or inconclusive results in statistical work can be powerful in showing the hollowness of over-generalised claims. That is the case here. Because Dunn's statistical work produces few strong correlations it helps to show the shaky empirical foundations underpinning claims about the benefits of trade. For this reviewer at least, it therefore reinforces the scepticism about politicians advocating trade agreements, such as the recent China-Australia Free Trade Agreement and the Trans Pacific Partnership. These agreements, and the econometric estimates on which claims about their macroeconomic benefits are based, are not specifically analysed in the book because Dunn's concerns are broader. He wants to make the case for looking beyond simplistic notions about the benefits of exchange to more fundamental concerns about production relations within different countries and global capitalism. This would put class and power more centrally in the political economic spotlight.

**Tom Barnes**

**Informal Labour in Urban India: Three Cities, Three Journeys**

*Routledge, Abingdon, 2015, 202pp.*

The transformation of the Indian economy during the last quarter century is widely acknowledged. As this book shows, however, what is involved is not a straightforward process of change to a Western-style industrial and consumer society. Given India's size and complexity, one could hardly expect that to occur anyway. Linear forms of change – whether from backward to modern industry, from informal to formal employment, from rural to urban living, from widespread poverty to relative affluence, or from small to big enterprises – these are not useful ways of seeing what has actually been happening. This book by Tom Barnes is based on