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Kenneth Pomeranz, Steven Topik. *The World That Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present.* Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1999. 256 pp. $34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7656-0250-3.

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When I think back to my high school social studies teachers, I think of two in particular. The first, a stroke victim and alcoholic, who we surely helped dispatch from this planet prematurely, stressed the interconnectedness of events around the world and the second, a charismatic impassioned liberal who always stressed the minutia of history and how if only… the world would be a better place. Although as students we always spoke about the latter's incredible pedagogical skill, looking back I gained much more insight about the study of history and society from the former, because even though his room was chaos most of us remembered that in the late 1800s the "frontier" was closing and American capital needed outlets abroad.

Reading *The World That Trade Created, Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400-the Present* by Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik, I was reminded of my high school experience and what might be good material for my current classes at Custer High School. In this collection of short essays on everything from the Fujian Trade Diaspora to the Euro, Pomeranz and Topik make the point of my incapacitated 10th grade teacher: global integration is not new and it affects us all. This point is made early and often in this well written survey of global economic history.

The introduction begins by tracing currency changes in 15th century China throughout the globe and looks not just at how the lives of elites are altered but how even the lowliest Aztec blood donor is likely to feel the consequences of such decisions. The chapters continue in this vein dealing with topics ranging from the ship building industry in China to the story of Guano.

As a high school social studies teacher, trying to make connections between the material we are studying and our daily lives is an ongoing struggle. You may have all the credibility in the world with your students, but we do not really well serve them unless we present meaningful curriculum materials. *The World That Trade Created* makes our job a little easier, particularly for World History and Macro-Economics teachers because it takes complex ideas and presents them in a relevant and entertaining way.

Pomeranz and Topik engage serious issues like "The Violent Birth of Corporations" or "Trademarks: What's in a Name?" or "Primitive Accumulation: Brazilwood" or the drug trade. And as you probably can tell by the titles of the chapters, they refreshingly take sides. The brevity of the articles is a clear benefit for high school classrooms. But bathroom visit length essays is surely not a good reason to check out this work. The essays transform complex and sometimes topical issues into compelling reading and springboards for debate. The section on "The Economic Culture of Drugs" has been particularly successful in my classroom. I usually begin the class with a reading from this chapter, they range from the drug war, coffee and opium markets to sugar and the Haitian Revolution. The topic alone usually starts a lively discussion but if not I have students discuss how coffee or drug production affects them or the person who produced or refined the product.

I then conclude having students write a short essay on any aspect of the reading and discussion that interested them. This approach allows the students to follow their interests but focuses enough to keep them on track. Economic, sociological, political, anthropological, and historical issues always come up with this approach.

The essays almost always link the impact of elite decisions on ordinary people. For instance, as mentioned above, the worker at the refinery or the farmer who grew the poppy, coffee bean or cocoa is at the center of the discussion not just Pablo Escobar or the latest drug czar. The essays also usually illuminate the first world/consumer-third world/producer dichotomy. But they do not overlook how this dichotomy is historically specific and how quickly a first world position can be altered. In this regard the essays on India, China, and the Aztecs come to mind.

Beyond the progressive outlook of many of the essays in *The World That Trade Created*, this book can be just plain fun. Take for example the essay in the chapter on "Making Modern Markets." The essay opens with a myth breaker on the aphorism "necessity is the mother of invention" through discussing the history of the tin can and the can opener. "Of course she is," quips the author, who then proceeds to examine why sometimes it is not necessarily always the case. The description of sailors trying to open the first large thick walled tin cans with knives, chisels, and bayonets and lines such as "not that all those cans piled up for the fifty years before anyone could open them" have been great fun for me and my students. Another example is the essay on "How the Cows Ate the Cowboys." Here Pomeranz and Topik describe the life of the "half horse, half man" gaucho and the inordinate amount of time they spent with horses. Who doesn't find interesting figuring out how a man might bathe, eat, attend mass, fish, and god knows what else on horse back?

The World That Trade Created has hooks that will pique students' interest. It has an interdisciplinary approach that is ideal for World Studies or World History courses. It is topical when it explores the drug trade or how entire neighborhoods or countries can quickly be destroyed by corporate or imperialist interests. It also is a humanistic work. In a straightforward way *The World That Trade Created* looks at how we are interconnected, how a slave revolt in Haiti and rumming in New England are related or how a cup of Ethiopian Strong in Milwaukee effects the lives of transient coffee pickers in Quetzaltenango. This book connected my students with the world. I strongly recommend it.

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