

PREFACE

THE conference which gave rise to the papers presented in this volume took place at Portoroz, Yugoslavia, from 23rd August to 1st September, 1959. It was the sixth general (biennial) conference of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth and the first to take place in Eastern Europe. As the full list of papers on p. 253 shows, these meetings provoked an unusually large number of contributions, some of which were substantial, both in content and in sheer size. This posed difficult problems of selection and editing for the present volume.

In making our choice we had three main criteria in mind. In the first place, we wanted to include the substantive contributions to the topics on which the International Association has so far published relatively little. Secondly, we decided to omit papers which were essentially advance reports on research, the results of which would be published in whole or in part in some other accessible source. Thirdly, within each topic, we tried to select a reasonably coherent and representative group of papers.

Such criteria are not easy to apply and the stern process of selection was inevitably somewhat arbitrary. I am grateful to the session organizers for advice on the papers with which they were concerned, and to Dr. R. C. Geary and Mr. E. F. Jackson in particular for generously relieving me of some of the laborious editorial tasks of trying both to weld an international collection of papers into a coherent volume and to economize in space without losing anything of substance from the original contributions. The final responsibility for the book as a whole rests with me, however. If there are still too many irregularities of style or presentation or if we have omitted papers which we should have included, the fault is mine.

Application of our second criterion meant the exclusion of all but one of the economic growth papers, and we thus narrowed the choice to three of the topics of the Portoroz Conference—deflation of national accounts, financial accounting, and social accounting in Eastern Europe. A new introduction by Dr. Geary, the organizer of the sessions on deflation,

puts this group of papers into perspective and takes account of some of the major points made at the meetings themselves. We confined ourselves to only two of the flow of funds studies—a general paper on methodology and a review of recent developments which is a specially re-written version of the paper originally presented at Portoroz. Finally, we sought out a variety of papers on social accounting in Eastern European countries—a general review of their concepts and methods, a critical discussion of the methods adopted for a particular country (East Germany), an economic growth study (for Yugoslavia), and a theoretical discussion of Eastern and Western social accounting concepts. For two of those (the general review and the study of methods in East Germany) we abandoned our usual practice of putting references into footnotes as they occur, in favour of listing them alphabetically at the end of each paper. By this means we aimed to provide convenient and reasonably comprehensive bibliographies on fields for which up-to-date bibliographical information is not readily accessible in other sources.

A volume of this kind represents the co-operative endeavours of a large number of people, and I hope I shall be forgiven for not mentioning them individually. In particular, I should like to express my thanks to the authors who allowed their papers to appear here when other, and frequently quicker, avenues of publication were available, to those who permitted us to compress their contributions in the interest of space and to those who agreed to re-write their papers in order to complement other material or to cover additional ground. Finally, I must acknowledge my debt to Mrs. Rose Knight, who has done most of the work of preparing this heterogeneous typescript for the press and who has read the proofs.

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