

## Global Trade and Conflicting National Interests

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with a contribution by  
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To our wives, Lilian Gomory-Wu and Hilda Baumol, and  
to our families whose interest and support were vital to the writing of  
this book



## *To Lionel Robbins*

In 1994 I was invited to give the annual Robbins lectures at the London School of Economics. At that time Ralph Gomory and I were in the midst of working out the theory that is the subject of this book, so I decided that our joint work would be the subject matter of those lectures. My long association with Lionel Robbins (later Lord Robbins) and with his delightful wife Iris, Lady Robbins, added a strong personal element, so when I was invited to give the Robbins lectures I naturally leaped at the opportunity to report our work in that respected forum.

A highlight of our trip to London for the lectures was the opportunity to introduce the Gomorys, sadly, not to Lionel and Iris, but to the next Robbins generation, with whom we have been close friends for the half century since I studied and taught at the London School of Economics. At that great school Lionel Robbins was my mentor, and he and his wonderful wife became close friends of my wife Hilda and myself. I can tell many anecdotes of our meetings over the years, but that would require a separate essay. Here, I need only quote from what I have written elsewhere of the unforgettable experience of association with Lionel

Central to that experience was the man himself. Tall, massive, stately, with a sonorous voice and a leonine mane. . . . It is sheer understatement to describe him as a man with a powerful personality. His students would find themselves unconsciously mimicking his style, the personal attributes and speech patterns that recalled an earlier, less mechanized age. Yet one soon learned that his was not a domineering personality. His sense of humor was profound, and his anecdotes riveting. He was invariably considerate and kind, particularly to younger people and particularly when few others were present to observe his acts. But even more striking were his command of the language, his clarity of mind, and his incredible erudition. . . . (From the foreword to Robbins LSE lectures, in *A History of Economic Thought*, S. G. Medina and W. J. Samuels, eds., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998)

There were many reasons, both personal and professional, for our giving these lectures, but one is particularly pertinent and relates to Lionel Robbins. Lionel Robbins had given much thought to trade issues, and had emerged with a predisposition toward the virtues of free and unimpeded trade. We share that view. This is worth mentioning because there is some danger that this book will be misunderstood as a protectionist argument, which it emphatically *is not*. Indeed in this book we only consider free trade. Our message, rather, is that under modern free-trade conditions, there is no longer one, but rather many possible free-trade outcomes, and a country is better off with some than with others. Knowing Lionel Robbins's receptivity to new ideas and logical argument, I am confident he would not have taken umbrage at our analysis or its conclusions, and would readily have understood our true intentions. Thus the association of this book with the Robbins lectures may perhaps contribute something to clarification of its purpose.

I have had the pleasure of dedicating a book to Lionel and to his wife, both of whom we loved deeply. And, predictably, he responded in kind. Only several weeks ago I needed to consult his materials in his several books on classical political economy. On opening one of them the dedication leaped out at me: "To William and Hilda Baumol who made glorious summer of a winter of discontent" and underneath, in his hand, is written "with love from Lionel."

I am happy that this book gives me another opportunity to express my affection and admiration for Lionel Robbins.

William J. Baumol



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