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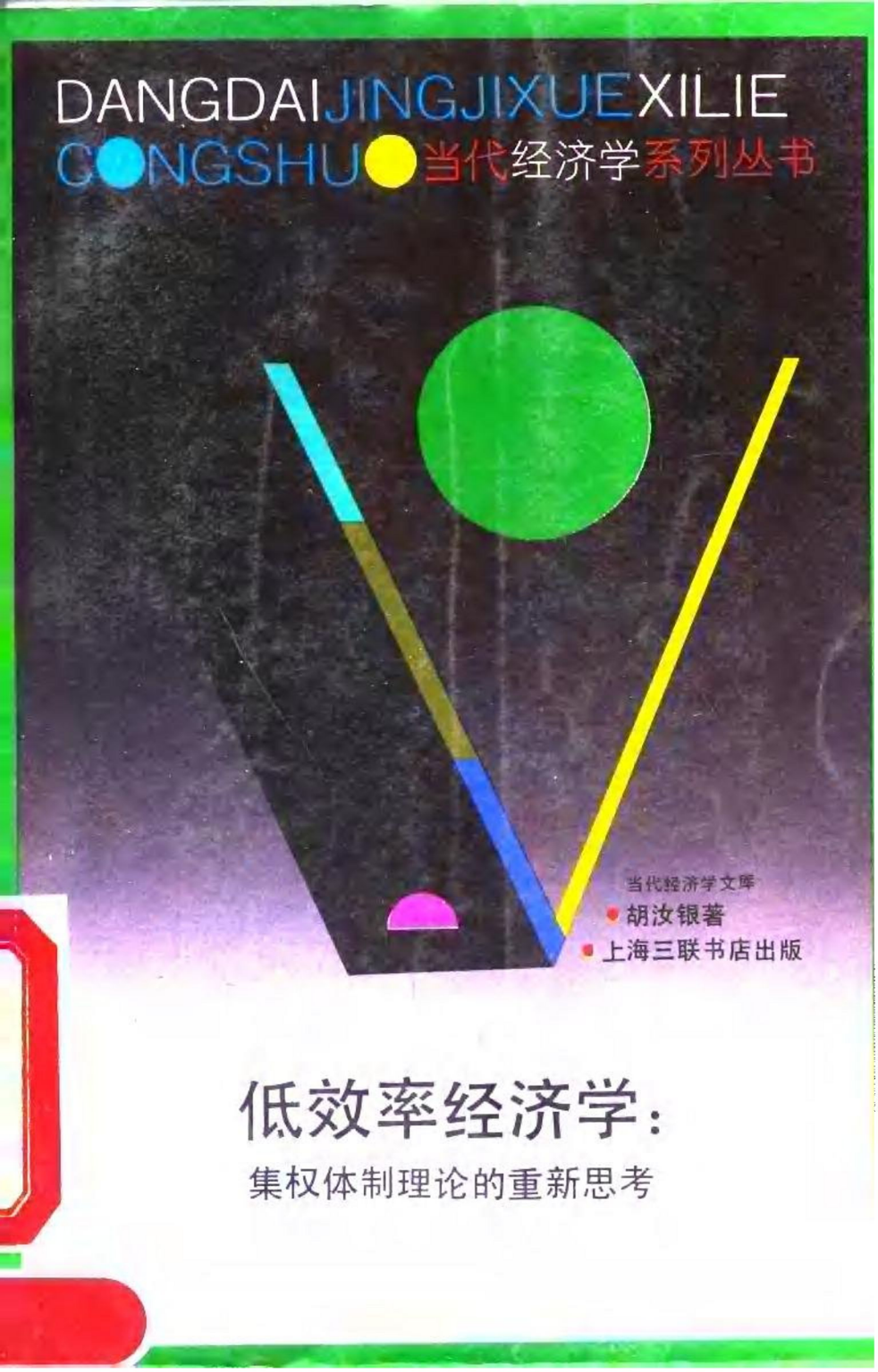

当代经济学文库

胡汝银著

上海三联书店出版

低效率经济学：

集权体制理论的重新思考

一切经济理论研究只有一个最高的理想，即为社会发展，为人类发展，竭尽忠诚，努力探求，作出应有的贡献。

本书作者题记

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集权体制理论的重新思考　　胡汝银　著

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出版前言

为了全面地、系统地反映当代经济学的全貌及其进程，总结与挖掘当代经济学已有的和潜在的成果，展示当代经济学新的发展方向，我社决定出版“当代经济学系列丛书”。

“当代经济学系列丛书”是大型的、高层次的、综合性的经济学术理论丛书。它包括四个子系列：（1）当代经济学文库；（2）当代经济学译库；（3）当代经济学教学参考书系；（4）当代经济学新知文丛。该丛书在学科领域方面，不仅着眼于各传统经济学科的新成果，更注重经济前沿学科、边缘学科和综合学科的新成就；在选题的采择上，广泛联系海内外学者，努力开掘学术功力深厚、思想新颖独到、作品水平拔尖的“高、新、尖”著作。“文库”力求达到中国经济学界当前的最高水平；“译库”翻译当代经济学的名人名著；“教学参考书系”主要出版国外著名高等院校

80年代后期90年代初期的通用教材；“新知文丛”则运用通俗易懂的语言，介绍国际上当代经济学的最新发展。

本丛书致力于推动中国经济学的现代化和国际标准化，力图在一个不太长的时期内，从研究范围、研究内容、研究方法、分析技术等方面逐步完成中国经济学从传统向现代的转轨。我们渴望经济学家们支持我们的追求，向这套丛书提供高质量的标准经济学著作，进而为提高中国经济学的水平，使之立足于世界经济学之林而共同努力。

我们和经济学家一起瞻望着中国经济学的未来。

上海三联书店

1991年5月

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ABSTRACT

ECONOMICS OF INEFFICIENCY: THE THEORY OF CENTRALLY PLANNED ECONOMY RECONSIDERED

This book is an attempt to develop an analytical framework to explain systematically the key problem, i. e., the widespread inefficiency in the centrally planned economy (CPE). The focus is on the objectives of individual agents subject to the peculiar constraints in CPE. It is emphasized that political pressures, centralized control and forced compliance, which play major roles in the functioning of CPE, lead to a special incentive structure and have important effects on the choice set and economic performance. The objective function is broadened consistently to include nonpecuniary elements such as leisure and self-preserving political security. The pervasive inefficiency is imputed to the rational utility-maximizing behaviour of individual decision-makers based on inefficiently institutional

arrangements.

In CPE, the centralized control leads up to the result that controller preferences determine what is produced. When the controller's preferences are strikingly different from those of the public, vast misallocation of resources results, and the society as a whole suffers heavy efficiency losses. The implication of vast misallocation is investigated in a two-sector model relating to both economic and political goods production.

Distortion of resource allocation and difficulties of measuring separate contributions by workers owing to centralized decision making it impossible to distribute according to contribution in CPE. Consequently, a fixed wage and "big pot" system is brought about. Political pressures and other coercive measures have to be applied at the same time in order to force individual workers into the effort level required for their political security The fixed wage system makes zero the personal marginal pecuniary gains of work, while the information asymmetry makes shirking and loafing on the

job not readily observable. Meanwhile the self-preserving political security level of individual workers is not lowered by unobserved slackness on the job. As a result, both the disincentive effect of the fixed wage system and the high costs of information and monitoring combine to induce individual workers to cut down their effective labour supply and effort level, giving rise to internal inefficiency of organizations.

The centralized control, together with the political coercion, creates a mechanism of rewarding and selecting on the basis of compliance. This mechanism deprives agents at the lower levels of the option of not undertaking inefficient activities centrally controlled and results in security-seeking and self-preserving behaviour of the firms and individual workers. It leads to high costs and low benefits of voluntary (not planned) innovations with a disparity between private incentives and social welfare, reinforcing incentives for firms and workers not to engage in organizational and technical innovative activities. Because of the high costs of central-

ly controlled innovation and the high risk of voluntary innovation, there is an anti-innovation tendency in CPE.

Lack of organizational and technical innovations forces CPE to rely upon an extensive pattern of economic growth with a great drain on manpower and material resources. In the process of such an extensive growth, by setting higher output targets, the central controllers exert stronger political pressures on individual workers so as to compel them to keep higher effort levels. On the other hand, the firms and individual workers try to bid up input quotas for given output targets in order to minimize the risk of reaching the targeted output levels. From this repeated game, persistently widespread shortages result. Under the conditions of deficient import of technology and resources, there will inevitably be a long cycle in which economic growth rates decline with the exhaustion of sources for the extensive growth.

To reduce substantially the pervasive in-

efficiency, it is necessary to set up efficient economic organizations and to have the economic system of CPE thoroughly reformed.

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