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Introduction by Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins

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## Introduction by Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, Yale University

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Perhaps no subject has received more academic attention over the last five years than neoliberalism. What makes the discussion unique is its wide-ranging interdisciplinary scope—scholars across a variety of disciplines such as religion, literature, gender studies, rather than simply, economics, history and politics, have given it considerable attention—combined with the fact that numerous scholars question whether it even exists. A milder version of the argument would simply claim that it is not helpful for understanding contemporary global social economic forces.<sup>1</sup> We have a scenario, then, in which a rather large industry devoted to neoliberalism has emerged, alongside an ongoing debate as to what it actually is.<sup>2</sup>

One discipline that has gone out of its way to answer this question is that of intellectual history. Works by Angus Burgin, Philip Mirowski, Daniel Stedman Jones, Serge Audier, and others have deepened our understanding of just how historically complex neoliberalism is.<sup>3</sup> They all seem to suggest that there are many neoliberalisms. Their works ultimately aim to offer an explanation as to how we arrived at the current dominant understanding of neoliberalism which emerged during the 1980. This amounts to an attempt to explain the nature of such things as austerity measures, deregulation, anti-statism, free markets, market fundamentalism, free enterprise, Reaganism, Thatcherism, and human self-interest.

In showing how this version of neoliberalism came to dominate, these scholars usually begin their stories in interwar Europe, at events such as the Colloque Walter Lippmann held in Paris in 1938, where the word “neoliberalism” was mentioned, or shortly after World War II, and particularly with the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947 in Switzerland. They then move westward to Britain and the United States, specifically with a focus on the neoclassical economic school of thought at the “Chicago School,” and its key theorists, Milton Friedman or Gary Becker, to reveal how the current understanding of neoliberalism came about. But two questions arise: first, is the description of what constitutes neoliberalism accurate? And second, are there alternatives to the historical trajectories of the standard account that ultimately concentrates on the Anglo-American world? If the answer to the second question is yes, this will have implications for how we approach the first.

The major contribution of Quinn Slobodian’s amazing book, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*, is to offer a different historical path for understanding neoliberalism, and in doing so, to correct standard misunderstandings of it. In particular, he offers a “genealogy of thought that link[s] the neoliberal world economic imaginary from the 1920s to the 1990s” (257) by focusing primarily on what he describes as

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<sup>1</sup> See Daniel Rodgers, “The Uses and Abuses of Neoliberalism,” *Dissent* (Winter 2018): <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/uses-and-abuses-neoliberalism-debate>.

<sup>2</sup> For the debate on the legitimacy of the concept see “Debating the Uses and Abuses of Neoliberalism,” *Dissent* (22 January 2018), [https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/debating-uses-abuses-neoliberalism-forum](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/debating-uses-abuses-neoliberalism-forum)

<sup>3</sup> Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets Since the Depression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste* (London: Verso, 2014); Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Serge Audier, *Néo-libéralisme(s): Une archéologie intellectuelle* (Paris: Grasset, 2012).

the globalist thought of the Geneva School of neoliberalism. The so called Austrian school of economics, which is typically associated with Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, was not so much concerned with shrinking the government or abolishing regulations as it was with establishing a global economic order that would insulate markets against sovereign states, political change, and turbulent democratic demands for greater equality and social justice. Many of the neoliberals inspired by this global vision relocated to Geneva where they sought to influence such global institutions as the League of Nations, the European Court of Justice, and the World Trade Organization. Slobodian's alternative cartography of neoliberalism has complicated the standard interpretations.

This H-Diplo forum brings together a number of leading scholars to weigh in on Slobodian's argument. Timothy Shenk observes that by filling in the missing story of the Geneva School, Slobodian has done for the study of neoliberalism, what the historian Martin Jay's famous book, *The Dialectical Imagination*, did for the history of the Frankfurt School.<sup>4</sup> His main point is to raise the question of how the Geneva School relates to the Chicago School. For instance, he implies that the Chicago School economist Henry Simons seemed to share much in common with the thinking of the Geneva School.

Janek Wasserman argues that Slobodian might be placing too much emphasis on the Geneva School's influence. Hayek, he argues, had very little connection to Geneva. In other words, for Wassermann, Vienna, and not Geneva, is the real place of importance for understanding the history of neoliberalism.

Adom Getachew raises the interesting point that neoliberalism might be considered less as a post-imperial project and rather as constituting the reinvention of empire. In this sense, she pushes Slobodian to make more connections between neoliberalism and empire.

Tehila Sasson suggests that Slobodian's book might be enriched by a broader understanding of the role of race at the end of empire in neoliberal thought. She points to the neoliberal politician, Enoch Powell, who embraced a form of "anti-imperial racism that connected the free market economy with a segregated commonwealth of nations," something that does not sound that dissimilar to certain contemporary Alt-Right visions of global order. Getachew also raises questions about a deeper understanding of race and neoliberalism, a topic on which Slobodian continues to work.

Slobodian offers an enriching response to his interlocutors, one which also points to future directions the historical study of neoliberalism might take.

### Participants:

**Quinn Slobodian** teaches history at Wellesley College. He is writing a book about the capitalist futurism of the far right.

**Adom Getachew** is Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and the College at the University of Chicago. Her forthcoming book, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019) excavates and reconstructs the anticolonial effort to remake the

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

international order by securing a right to self-determination within the newly founded United Nations, constituting regional federations in Africa and the Caribbean, and creating the New International Economic Order.

**Tehila Sasson** is an Assistant Professor of History at Emory University. Her work focuses on the relationship between ethics, sovereignty and the economy in Modern Europe, and particularly Britain. She is the author of “Milking the Third World: Humanitarianism, Capitalism and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott,” *American Historical Review*, 121, no. 4 (October 2016): 1196-1224. She is currently completing a book with the working title “We Are the World: Humanitarian Ethics, Global Markets and The End of Empire.”

**Timothy Shenk** is a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis and a Fellow at New America. His first book, *Maurice Dobb: Political Economist*, was published with Palgrave Macmillan in 2013. He is currently at work on two books. *Inventing the American Economy*, an intellectual biography of the American economy, is under contract with Princeton University Press. *Democracy’s Revenge: The People, The Powerful, and the American Political Tradition*, a history of attempts to represent and restrain the will of the people in the United States from the writing of the Constitution to the presidency of Donald Trump, is under contract with Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

**Janek Wasserman** is Associate Professor of Modern German and Central European History at the University of Alabama. He specializes in European intellectual history, Central European history, and the history of economic thought. His first book, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938*, appeared with Cornell in 2014 (paperback, 2017). His next book, *Marginal Revolutionaries: Austrian Economics from Coffeehouse to Tea Party* will appear in 2019.

Neoliberalism has an oft-repeated history that began in the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago, and was exported to Latin America, and in particular to Augusto Pinochet's Chile before becoming ascendant in the Global North with the rise of President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. While this standard narrative identifies the roots of neoliberalism in European intellectual circles of the 1930s and 1940s, it is largely an Anglo-American story in which neoliberal thought is associated with an anti-statist libertarianism, a commitment to the self-regulating global market, and the reduction of all human motivation to rational and therefore calculable self-interest.

Against this dominant account, Quinn Slobodian's *Globalists* offers a compelling counter-narrative by situating the birth of neoliberalism in the context of twentieth-century decolonization and shifting the geography of neoliberal thought from Chicago to Geneva. What emerges from this effort is a significant recasting of the animating political predicaments that gave rise to neoliberalism and a revised account of its central tenets.

Slobodian argues that neoliberalism is first and foremost a post-imperial intellectual and political project. Well-known figures like the Austrian economist and Nobel Prize winner Friedrich Hayek, as well as the broader cohort of "Geneva School" neoliberals, which included Wilhelm Röpke, Ludwig von Mises, Michael Heilperin, Lionel Robbins, Jan Tumlir, Frieder Roessler, and Ernst-Ulrich Petersmann, saw in the age of decolonization that began with the fall of the Habsburg Empire a radical challenge to the integrated international economy of the nineteenth century (8). The globalization of popular sovereignty and with it the political salience of demands for economic equality threatened to disrupt and disintegrate the international economic order. In light of this challenge, neoliberals framed their task as one of 'encasing' the economy from democratic demands.

The insulation of *dominium*, the "world of property, where people owned things, money, and land scattered across the earth" from the political realm of *imperium*, where the world was "partitioned into bounded, territorial states," is often perceived as a negative project of removing state intervention from the economic arena (10). On this view, neoliberalism is presented as a project of what Karl Polanyi called disembedding the market (16). In contrast, Slobodian illustrates that neoliberals envisioned the encasement of the economy as a positive project of constituting laws and institutions that would protect the economy from political encroachment. They were not "critics of the state" as such, but "skeptics of the democratic nation-state" (15).

This project was conceived in the international arena and marks what Slobodian calls "ordoglobalism" (12). Rather than contesting and resisting the redistributive and regulative ambitions of the nation-state within the orbit of domestic politics, neoliberals looked beyond it in order to downgrade the "dogma of national sovereignty" (111). Through international laws and institutions, they sought to bind the nation-state to an economic constitution that would defang its bid for economic sovereignty. For example, during the interwar period, Mises championed the Eastern Democratic Union to replace the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. This regional federation "permitted the persistence of the [cultural] accoutrements of nationhood" while creating a strong federal government that preserved free trade and the free movement of labor (111-112). The system of "double government" where an "invisible government of the economy" predominated over "a visible government of neutered nations" was a recurring model for neoliberal globalists (112). In the second wave of decolonization after World War II, they sought to scale this vision to the international realm.

Neoliberals launched their regional and international projects from Geneva, the quintessential city of internationalism. From this location, the Geneva school participated in the making of the central international institutions of the twentieth century and formulated their own insights against a backdrop of competing visions of globalism. In the interwar period, Habberler and others participated in the League of Nations' efforts to create a World Economic Survey. But as the mapping of the global and national economies was mobilized to advocate for state planning, neoliberals "placed the economy beyond the space of representation" and therefore out of reach to those who sought to ensure stability and achieve redistribution through state action (86). Pioneered in the interwar period, the idea of a world economy "beyond capture" would be resuscitated in the 1970s against the New International Economic Order (NIEO), the ambitious postcolonial project to overcome structural inequality in international trade through an internationalization of welfarism. Against the postcolonial mobilization of international institutions and postcolonial sovereignty to achieve international equality, Geneva school neoliberals re-presented the foundations of the market as "precognitive responses to price signals" (229; emphasis in original). Order, on this view, was not achieved by aspiring to an end state of equality, but instead a time when states and individuals deferred to the complex rules of the market (235).

But while the neoliberal globalists rejected the NIEO's welfare world, they were also ambitious institution builders who conceived of various structures for their vision of double government. In unearthing their institutional visions, Slobodian highlights the internal debates within the Geneva school. For example, in a chapter about the early years of the European Economic Community (EEC), Slobodian reconstructs a fissure between a younger cohort of neoliberals who came to defend European integration as a regional experiment in economic constitution-making and Röpke, Habberler and Heilperin, who favored global integration based on the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) (183). From the perspective of the universalists, European integration was only a further sign of global economic disintegration. In his 1958 report for GATT, Habberler singled out the EEC's extension of agricultural protections to associated territories (colonies and recently independent countries) for special critique (200). Non-associated countries of the Third World made common cause with Habberler and used his report to critique the exclusionary character of the *Eurafrique* model of association with the EEC (201). This episode not only reveals the internal contestations among neoliberals about "which institutional replacements for empire were worthy of their loyalty" (194), but also highlights that the fault line of post-imperial economic debate should not be caricatured as a protectionist Third World against a project of liberalization. Instead, we might think about the world after decolonization as a staging ground for competing visions of economic globalization that reached their crescendo in the struggle between the NIEO and the neoliberal GATT reforms that began at the end of the 1970s.

Beyond reframing the history of neoliberalism, this examination of the multivalent character of the debates that decolonization engendered is one of Slobodian's most important contributions to global intellectual history. Over the last decade, renewed interest in the history of decolonization has explored the relationship between anticolonial nationalism and human rights, with a particular focus on the emergence of the right of self-determination.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, historians have also rediscovered foreclosed alternatives to the nation-

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<sup>1</sup> On decolonization and human rights see, Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), chapter 3. See also Jan Eckel, "Human Rights and Decolonization: New Perspectives and New Questions," *Humanity*:

state in short-lived projects of transnational federation.<sup>2</sup> These critical interventions have so far largely situated decolonization within the realm of politics and emphasized rights and political institutions. In contrast, Slobodian highlights the ways that the economy was a central if not the predominant site in which the aftermath of formal imperialism was contested. From anticolonial nationalists like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, who famously defined neocolonialism as a project of perpetuating domination through economic means, to the neoliberal globalists, who worked to recreate the global and imperial economy of the nineteenth century, competing visions of a post-imperial economy were deeply tied to the institutional projects political actors pursued.

Nkrumah's formulation of neocolonialism as the disaggregation of economic and political sovereignty requires considering the extent to which neoliberal globalism was less a post-imperial project than a moment of empire's reinvention. Although *Globalists* gestures in this direction, Slobodian does not suggest a deep interconnection between neoliberalism and empire. In a striking chapter titled "A World of Races," he presents Röpke's explicit endorsement of apartheid South Africa as an anomalous position among neoliberals (172). While Röpke defended an account of biological inferiority, Hayek and others sought to contain the potentially revolutionary implications of a democratic South Africa by "downgrading the significance of representative government [and] reducing its roles to the enforcement of competition and contract" (175). Slobodian concludes that "the main stream of neoliberals saw a world of rules, not a world of races" (181).

It is unclear, though, whether these worlds were so easily separable in the age of decolonization. For many postwar figures, popular sovereignty came to be sutured to the racialized black and brown subjects of empire whose demands for independence and equality were perceived as excessive and irrational. Already in the 1950s, Slobodian notes, "the struggle against expropriation [in the postcolonial world] was taking on a racialized language of the rule of law against the rule of the jungle, pitting the rational West against a Global South, with its 'emotional' commitment to sovereignty" (140). These racialized depictions were magnified in the 1970s call for a New International Economic Order. For example, *Tumilr*'s editorial that critiqued the NIEO was accompanied by a cartoon depicting "a grotesquely caricatured Arab man flipping a coin marked with the sign of industry to a supine turbaned and similarly hook-nosed beggar representing the Global South" (249). This visual characterization of the demand for international redistribution was not limited to neoliberal circles and illustrates how the Third World vision of an egalitarian post-imperial world was viewed as an existential threat to what Robert Vitalis has called the "white world order."<sup>3</sup> Though Slobodian's history of neoliberalism situates its anti-democratic origins in the twentieth century's first decolonization in Europe,

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*An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 1:1 (Fall 2010): 111–1135; Steven L.B. Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). On the history and legacy of Bandung, see Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Collins, "Decolonisation and the 'Federal Moment,'" *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 24:1 (February 2013): 21–40; Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).



by the time the end of empire had moved to the Global South, the neoliberal world of rules worked to preserve and extend a world of races.

Considering this interconnection might also help make sense of why neoliberalism triumphed when it did. One unanswered question in *Globalists* is how the neoliberal vision of encasement lost to competing projects in the 1940s, but won out in the 1970s and 80s. Slobodian notes that the later institutionalization of the international investment codes neoliberals advocated in the 1940s, “is a startling recognition of the long-term defeat of the bargaining power of the Global South” (142). This defeat must be situated in two developments. First, critics of the Global South strategically mobilized the internal contradictions of the Third World project to challenge its legitimacy and coherence. Second, what Samuel Moyn has described as “the ideological dissociation of liberalism and empire, after more than a century of long and deep connection” made possible the reinvention of liberal internationalism. For Moyn, “the reclamation of liberalism” after the end of formal empire set the stage for an internationalism predicated on human rights.<sup>4</sup> This same set of conditions constituted the backdrop of neoliberal globalism’s triumph. As formal empires came to a slow end in southern Africa, and as the moral and political purchase of the Third World’s vision of a post-imperial world waned, neoliberal globalists could successfully stage their vision of empire by another name. That their vision fit so seamlessly with a resurgent American imperialism and required American power to realize in the world suggests that perhaps neoliberalism marked not the end of empire but its remaking.

Slobodian does not make the case for the kind of deep imbrication between empire and neoliberalism I am suggesting, but his pioneering contextualization of neoliberalism’s birth in the age of decolonization provides a necessary framework to consider this relationship anew.

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel Moyn, “Imperialism, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Human Rights,” in Akira Iriye et al., eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 172.



*Capitalism's Doubled World*

One of the clichés often told about neoliberalism is that it is deeply anti-statist. In this story, neoliberal policies have sought to replace the state with the market, to abolish public ownership in favor of private industry. Some date the story to the late 1960s, others to the 1980s. But the basic plot remains the same: neoliberalism negates the state in favor of market fundamentalism.

One of the main aims of Quinn Slobodian's *The Globalists* is to correct this tale. The book makes an important contribution to the history of neoliberal thought: it shows that neoliberals did not want to eradicate the state but rather to use it to their advantage. The state, they hoped, would help protect the world economy and keep mass democracy at bay. Neoliberalism, in other words, developed not as an anti-statist project but anti-democratic one. It was a project that was skeptical only of "the *nation-state*" (15).

If neoliberals sought to re-inscribe a new relationship between the state and the market, then they did so in response to one of the major historical transformations of the twentieth century: the global movement to decolonize Europe's empires. From the dissolution of the Habsburg territories in the 1920s (and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, although Slobodian doesn't talk about this much) to claims for self-determination and for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the 1970s, *The Globalists* shows how Geneva School neoliberals developed their theories in response to arguments for self-determination and demands for economic sovereignty.

The end of empire—as evident already in the book's subtitle—was the historical engine that drove the neoliberal project. It prompted neoliberals to place the state at the heart of their political economy. Using the term "decolonization" cannot encompass the temporal and spatial horizons of the historical transformation the book describes. *The Globalists* joins a rich and diverse body of scholarship that looks beyond official transfer of powers to examine the global history of the end of empires. What does the book have to teach us about neoliberals, the state, and the international order when empires were ending? And what kind of historical geography emerges from its narrative?

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Neoliberalism, *The Globalists* argues, evolved as a global project to remake world order. Like Western Marxists in the twentieth century, neoliberals were thinking in totalities, in which the state was a part of a larger whole: the global economy. In this story, the end of empires was a global and international process that began in the interwar period and never assumed the centrality of the state. Joining the work of historian Manu Goswami, *The Globalists* shows that interwar politics never took the nation-state as an inevitable project but rather saw it one of many future decolonized alternatives.<sup>1</sup>

What Slobodian calls the "neoliberal century" (11) began with the political and economic crises of the interwar period. Universal suffrage had shaped new mass polities, while other political frameworks, namely

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<sup>1</sup> Manu Goswami, "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms," *The American Historical Review* 117:5 (December 2012): 1461-1485.

the Habsburg Empire, had been dismantled. The gold standard, which had once been crucial condition of world trade and investment—had been abandoned. Trade unions were barricading the streets and holding European governments hostage across their empires and within their national borders. A global economic crash caused massive rates of unemployment. Money, labour, and capital were being politicized. What was once a separate world of nations (imperium) was, for neoliberals, dangerously on the cusp of merging with the world of property (dominium).

Against this threat, the first cohort of neoliberals—thinkers like Ludwig von Mises, Gottfried von Haberler, and Friedrich Hayek—developed alternatives that would shield the economy from democratic politics. In an era of internationalism, they began designing the political and legal institutions that could protect and govern the world economy, or “encase” (2) it as Slobodian suggests. Looking Eastwards rather than Southwards, they drew their inspiration from the supranational body they were most familiar with, the former Habsburg Empire, where they were born. From infancy, therefore, neoliberalism was a political and legal project.

The Habsburg Empire—the first empire in *The Globalist’s* narrative—was important for neoliberals for two interconnected reasons. First, the Habsburg Empire served as a model for economic decolonization. Studying what happened to the business cycles of smaller postcolonial central European states like Austria in the 1930s, Hayek and others came to the conclusion that changes in the international economic order mattered more than their national framework. National economies, they argued, could not be planned, and the entire idea of economic forecasting was hubristic. The nation could not be a unit of economic management. Instead, early neoliberals hoped that the League of Nations would serve as a supranational mechanism would ensure capitalism’s double world.

Second, for neoliberals like von Mises and Hayek, the Habsburg Empire could also serve as a legal model for the League of Nations, since it offered a framework where national and ethnic groups coexisted and were secondary to a centralized body that was invested with economic management. In the 1940s, when the decolonization of the French and British Empires was seen as inevitable, neoliberals proposed a “double government” (12) with a federal system that would allow nations to maintain control over cultural policy yet maintain free trade and free capital movement between nations. This double government, Hayek and others hoped, would preserve the international division of labor resources between the Global North and South, while satisfying demands for self-representation.

Federations, of course, were not a solution that was exclusive to neoliberals. In the 1940s, as the historian Or Rosenboim has shown, federalism also became a popular alternative for British and American intellectuals who hoped to create a democratic world order beyond empires or the nation state.<sup>2</sup> For West African political leaders, as the historian Frederick Cooper has argued, federations formed of political belonging to the French Union and even Europe.<sup>3</sup> The idea of “Eurafrica” for example,—which many neoliberals and postcolonial thinkers utilized as a pejorative term in the late 1950s—was one such alternative for a federalist vision supported more than a decade earlier by British politicians like the Labour MP and the UK foreign secretary

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<sup>2</sup> Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), Chapter 4.

Ernest Bevin among many others. *The Globalists* cannot possibly cover all of these debates, but it is worth remembering that in the postwar period, neoliberals were not the only ones to provincialize the state. At the end of empire, political thinkers and statesmen from across the political spectrum were rethinking the meaning of nation and sovereignty.

Just as neoliberals were not against the idea of the state per se, so were they not altogether against decolonization. For people like Hayek, the end of empire presented the opportunity to detach the political from the economic and to redesign the relationship between them. National independence could be acceptable as long as the totality of the world economy was separated from it and held at a supranational organization. After the Second World War, when European countries as well as many newly independent states in the global South were nationalizing their economies, neoliberals' battles focused on retaining economic sovereignty at the level of the international order. The political and economic, they argued, should be separated.

In the 1940s Geneva School neoliberal Michael Heilperin fought one such battle against the formation of an egalitarian International Trade Organization that was to be based on one country one-vote principle. By the 1950s Gottfried Haberler, instead, came to support the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which neoliberals saw as a supranational body that embodied the free-trade vision. GATT became the capstone of the neoliberal political imaginary.

The neoliberal campaign to support GATT in the late 1950s is particularly compelling episode. It reveals the complex relationship between neoliberal thought and the idea of empire. Against common assumptions, the book shows that not all neoliberals supported the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC). While a younger generation of neoliberal thinkers saw in the EEC a federalist and legal model "economic constitution" that separated a nation's political sovereignty from its economic sovereignty, the older generation of Geneva School neoliberals opposed it because they thought it was too neocolonial. The EEC was protectionism cloaked in a veil of integration. The EEC, they claimed, gave preferential access to the French, Dutch and British Empires and in the process discriminated against any country outside these territories. Tropical commodities like bananas, coffee, and coca from the colonies would gain a considerable advantage over places like Latin America with which West Germany traditionally traded. Neoliberals like Haberler actively billed GATT as a more universal organization than the Common Market, where economies like those of Brazil, Guatemala and Costa Rica could equality compete.

Haberler's neoliberal argument was taken up by some unlikely allies: Ghana, India, Indonesia, and other the so-called developing nations. In May 1959 fifteen African, Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American countries relied on Haberler's argument to mobilize a postcolonial critique of international trade. The end of empire generated not only protectionist calls based on a theory of global dependence but also, in the late 1950s, third world calls for economic liberalization. "The rise and spread of neoliberal ideas," asserts Slobodian, "can be understood only through its piecemeal adoption by Global South nations as a development strategy." (202) This is one of the book's best contributions. It shows how decolonization inspired multiple and contradictory calls for economic justice. Some were based on protectionist claims and others were based on calls for *laissez-faire*. The language of "fairness" could cut both ways.

By the 1970s, when the G-77 countries of the Global South utilized the language of economic justice to call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), neoliberals began to support GATT against their claims. The NIEO demands—which included sovereignty over natural resources and regulation of multinational

corporations—were, according to neoliberals, endangering the totality and universality of the economic order by suggesting special treatment for postcolonial nations. For neoliberals, “the internationalist NIEO was an attack on internationalism itself” (259).

In response, neoliberals like Jan Tumlir, Frieder Roessler and Ernst-Ulrich Petersmann working at GATT’s Office of Legal Affairs in the 1980s turned to the EEC as a potential model for a uniform law that overrode the power of individual member states. They hoped to transform GATT into a supra-national body that would serve a similar purpose to the European Court of Justice. What became the World Trade Organization (WTO) was to offer a form of trade constitutionalism, which would override state sovereignty and would include the Dispute Settlement Body and the Appellate Body on a global stage. Inspired by Hayek’s arguments in the 1930s, they argued the economy could only be governed by a neutral supra-national body—like the WTO—that would adjust the trade rules in response to the flow of the market. That, concludes Slobodian, was the idea behind neoliberal structural adjustment policies.

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*The Globalists* ends its neoliberal odyssey here, but there is a historical geography that the book only briefly considers: the one *within* the state. Although the book brilliantly demonstrates how decolonization shaped a global neoliberal vision of the international order, it offers only some initial insight to what neoliberals envisioned for the domestic order. In a slight detour to South Africa and Rhodesia in the early 1960s, the book looks at how segregation inspired neoliberals “to design a world safe for capitalism” (149). Joining the work of historians like Nancy MaLean who study the American south,<sup>4</sup> *The Globalists* shows that for neoliberals like Wilhelm Röpke, segregation and privatization were linked on a global stage. Even for neoliberals like the British economist William H. Hutt, who publicly denounced apartheid, South Africa and Rhodesia inspired theories about the weighted franchise to “counteract the negative effects of democracy” (151). The racialized version of decolonization in these places generated new neoliberal imaginaries about the role of race in reordering the relationship between state and the market.

But race, of course, played a much broader role at the end of empire in neoliberal thought about Europe too. Importantly, it shaped neoliberal ideas about two communities: one of the state’s members—its citizens—and that of the market, a story that is largely missing from *The Globalists*. In Britain, for example, the neoliberal politician Enoch Powell came to reconceive the relationship between the state and the market in response to the end of empire. Yet his embrace of the state was substantially different from the Geneva School brand of neoliberalism, the prime focus of *The Globalists*. As the historian Camilla Schofield has shown, in the early 1960s—after the Suez crisis, French President Charles de Gaulle’s rejection of Britain’s entry to the Common Market, and the unraveling of its imperial territories in Africa—Powell critiqued what he called Britain’s “post-imperial neurosis,”<sup>5</sup> and denounced the British government’s “imperial delusions” in institutions like the Commonwealth. Instead, Powell developed a post-imperial version of Britain’s role in the world that took

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<sup>4</sup> Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America* (New York: Viking Press Inc, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 161.

the *nation*-state to be the “ultimate political reality.”<sup>6</sup> It was a version strikingly different than the form of federalism or internationalism that Geneva School neoliberals like Hayek preached.

To understand Powell’s version of neoliberalism as well as others like him, however, requires us not only to venture into uncharted territories within *The Globalists* but also, more importantly, to take a different methodology to study the end of empire. Much of Powell’s view of the relationship between the nation-state and the global economy had to do with the fact that for Powell, decolonization was never exclusively an event that happened on the international scale. Instead, it was a global event that shaped British domestic and local politics. Writing (and speaking) in response to the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 (and 1968) as well as the Race Relation Act of 1965, Powell offered a version of the nation-state and the market that was steeped with a new form of anti-imperial racism that connected the free market economy with a segregated commonwealth of nations. This version’s racism did not easily match with Röpke and even Hutt’s ideas about South African and Rhodesian politics. Instead, for Powell, “money is colour-blind and economic forces will help the work of integration which must be done if homogeneous ... community, local and national, is to be restored.”<sup>7</sup>

Powell, of course, is just one example of the neoliberal global imaginary about the domestic. More broadly, questions about race and multiculturalism in Britain, France and Germany, as historian Rita Chin argued, were “were always interwoven with the postwar economic boom that drove a quarter century of prosperity and affluence.”<sup>8</sup> The welfare state, as historian Jordanna Bailkin has argued, was itself a product of post-imperial formations.<sup>9</sup> One could envision an entire chapter within the narrative of *The Globalist* on the so-called “world of welfare,” which was just as crucial for the neoliberal philosophy, that considers the connection between the neoliberal legal project within the state’s boundaries and racialized claims against multicultural national communities. My point is that the end of empire was a global event that shaped both the international as well as the local and national scales in welfare as well as neoliberal thinking. “Neoliberalism’s economization of the political,” to borrow a phrase from the political theorist Wendy Brown,<sup>10</sup> shaped notions and policies about citizenship, migration and labor as much as it did about the

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<sup>6</sup> Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*, 143.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>8</sup> Rita Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> For the relationship between welfare services and the end of empire see Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: Global, Area, and International Archive and the University of California Press, 2012); Jordanna Bailkin, “Where Did the Empire Go? Archives and Decolonization in Britain,” *The American Historical Review* 120:3 (June 2015): 884-899.

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Brown, “Sacrificial Citizenship: Neoliberalism, Human Capital, and Austerity Politics,” *Constellations* 23:1 (March 2016): 3-14.

international order. One could even extend this globalist and post-imperial insight about neoliberalism down to the local level of the family.<sup>11</sup>

*The Globalists* is without a doubt a superb book but it is also a work of global history of decolonization and as such, offers a somewhat conservative geography. Globalism in this story is an outward looking gaze rather than a formation that could also have happened on domestic and local scales. As the cultural theorist Stuart Hall reminded us long ago, “the return to the local is often a response to globalization.”<sup>12</sup> Now that we have read *The Globalists* and know that neoliberals were never fully anti-statist, historians of the economy would do well to provincialize Europe from *within* its borders. We could now ask how did neoliberals have sought to remake—through law, regulations and interventions—the relationship between the global economy, the state, and the people who were included as well as excluded from it.

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<sup>11</sup> Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (MIT Press, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity,” in Anthony King, ed., *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 19-40. See also Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

Review by Timothy Shenk, Washington University in St. Louis

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About halfway through reading *Globalists*, I started to worry that I would get a crick in my neck from how often I was nodding in agreement. Yes, neoliberals have been more concerned with protecting markets than with unleashing them; yes, their vision was global from the start; yes, lawyers and bureaucrats are just as much a part of this story as tenured economists; yes, because not even Ludwig von Mises could survive on intellectual purity alone, it is crucial to understand both the ideas the neoliberals lived for and how they made a living; and yes, scholars have allowed the United States and Great Britain to take up too much space in this history, neglecting the importance of what the book, in an artful bit of branding, terms the Geneva School. This is a master-class in the historian's craft that grapples with some of the deepest issues in political economy by investigating how specific people addressed them in particular times and places.

Which brings me to the only question that now seems worth asking: where do we go from here? It has been said that there are two kinds of books: the type that starts arguments and the type that ends them. One of *Globalists* many achievements is to prove that a book can do both. Quinn Slobodian has done for the Geneva School what Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination* did for the Frankfurt School, and in the process he has filled a major omission in the scholarship.<sup>1</sup> He sticks close to his subjects, largely refraining from speculating about how this group might reshape the ways scholars think about the twentieth century as a whole. But the possibilities are tantalizing.

Think about, for example, those American economists that have sucked up so much oxygen in the current literature. "In the neoliberal century," he writes, "the Cold War was a sideshow to the main event of the rise of mass enfranchisement and the end of empire" (264). That is true enough for Friedrich Hayek, but what about Milton Friedman? The battle over universal white male suffrage was lost in the United States more than a century before the publication of *Capitalism and Freedom*, a work that is, in its way, as much a product of the Cold War as *The Manchurian Candidate*.<sup>2</sup> The point is not that all roads must lead back to Chicago, but that Slobodian's account lets us see familiar histories in a new light, making surprising what had earlier seemed predictable, illuminating connections that were previously obscured, and suggesting important new fields of inquiry.

Consider Friedman's teacher Henry Simons. On a first reading, he seems like a lost member of the Geneva School. "The representation of laissez-faire as a do-nothing policy is unfortunate and misleading," he argued. "It is an obvious responsibility of the state under this policy to maintain the kind of legal and institutional framework within which competition can function effectively as an agency of control."<sup>3</sup> Though Simon here referred to "laissez-faire," elsewhere he was clear that "modern conditions" had left conventional liberalism

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in John Davenport, "The Testament of Henry Simons," *University of Chicago Law Review* 14:1 (December 1946): 6.



“seriously embarrassed” if not “fundamentally decadent.”<sup>4</sup> He had no faith that Keynesians would be up to the job of reinventing liberalism, and he was just as skeptical about labor unions, which he viewed as a troubling sign of modern democracy’s susceptibility to the pleading of special interests backed up by the organizational power of a state-sanctioned monopoly. Continue along these lines, he warned, and “political control must degenerate into endless concessions to organized minorities, with gradual undermining of the ‘constitutional structure’ under which free-enterprise economy and representative government can function.”<sup>5</sup>

Here are the telltale signs of a Geneva School neoliberal: support for both an active state and robust markets; insistence on the importance of the law and institution-building; a self-conscious effort to renovate liberalism for a transformed world; profound suspicion of experts who would put their judgment ahead of the invisible hand’s; hostility toward the leaders of organized labor and the elected officials who catered to them; and a deep fear that politics would become a destructive battle among rival interest groups that would lead to chaos.

Look closer, though, and a different picture comes into focus. Slobodian’s neoliberals were concerned above all with the troubled relationship between democracy and capitalism. Theirs, he writes, was “an activist vision of statecraft mobilized to push back against the incipient power of democratically enabled masses and those special interests, including unions and cartels, who sought to obstruct the free movement of competition and the international division of labor” (92-93). This is why law proved so appealing: it keeps tempting policies out of the electorate’s reach, like a new dieter tossing all the Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups into the trash.

Simons had a different view. He acknowledged that capitalism—or, as he preferred to call it, the free-enterprise system—posed a challenge for democratic government. But he believed the two could be reconciled. As with markets, the question was how to devise institutions that would allow democracy to survive.

The true enemy, in Simons’s telling, were technocrats who claimed they knew better than either markets or the people. He set himself against Keynesianism not just because he thought it would not work but because it was on the wrong side of the divide “between democracy and ‘the managerial state.’”<sup>6</sup> Trusting policymaking to “special agencies and their experts” meant endowing them with “dictatorial, arbitrary power” that would destabilize markets and deprive voters of a meaningful say over their government.<sup>7</sup>

Simons used monetary policy to make his case for a better way of reconciling capitalism with democracy. Because no community benefitted in the long run from a wildly fluctuating currency, monetary policy was

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Simons, “Rules versus Authorities in Monetary Policy,” *Journal of Political Economy* 44:1 (February 1936): 1, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Simons, “Rules,” 15.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Simons, “Hansen on Fiscal Policy,” *Journal of Political Economy* 50:2 (April 1942): 182.

<sup>7</sup> Simons, “Hansen,” 179; Simons, “Rules,” 5.

“highly amenable to democratic, legislative control.”<sup>8</sup> But it also required oversight from specialists who understood complex economic theories and had the ability to act swiftly when needed. Here was the central problem: how to reconcile the exigencies of monetary policymaking with anything like democratic accountability.

The answer, he believed, was to replace discretion with rules. Average citizens might not understand how a government could control the price level, but if they understood why it was important to maintain price stability they could hold elected officials responsible for keeping inflation low. Imposing guidelines on policymakers—say, providing a target for the money supply’s annual growth—gave voters a yardstick they could use to measure the government’s performance. “[F]ocusing democratic discussion on general principles of policy” would turn those principles into “proper objects of legislative and popular discussion and of acceptance or rejection.”<sup>9</sup> More grandly, he said it would provide the basis for “a real monetary religion” grounded in “consensus upon general rules or norms” that both experts and electorates could approve.<sup>10</sup>

This consensus, it should be noted, would have to be cultivated at the national level, making Simons both a more democratic and a less global thinker than the typical member of the Geneva School. Neither should be that surprising. The world looked different from the Midwest than from *Mitteleuropa*. Even if Simons had wanted to repudiate democracy, it would only have pushed him even farther to the fringes of debate in a country that had long ago accepted mass enfranchisement. And the size of the United States economy gave American policymakers room to maneuver that their counterparts on the continent could only envy.

If Slobodian’s account traces the route from Vienna in the 1920s to the World Trade Organization today, then beginning with Simons leads toward different but nonetheless significant destinations—toward, for example, the inflation targeting regimes that currently shape decision-making at central banks around the world. But those central bankers owe just as much to the intellectual descendants of Keynes, or at least to the Americanized brand of Keynesianism developed by figures like Paul Samuelson, as they do to Simons. The resulting system is not purely democratic, market-based, or technocratic. It is durable because so many interests had a hand in its creation, and it is vulnerable to attack for precisely the same reason.

Thanks to Slobodian, we are now better positioned to understand how the Geneva School shaped this order, and how they failed. What remains is a reckoning with the full panoply of bureaucrats, experts, politicians, business leaders, campaign donors, movement leaders, and ordinary voters responsible for the tangled mess of institutions that is today charged with managing the global economy in all its facets. I hope that each is as lucky in its historians as Geneva’s neoliberals have been in theirs.

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<sup>8</sup> Simons, “Hansen,” 176.

<sup>9</sup> Simons, “Hansen,” 179.

<sup>10</sup> Simons, “Hansen,” 183.

Review by Janek Wasserman, University of Alabama

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Quinn Slobodian has written the most significant reconsideration of the history of neoliberalism to appear in recent memory. Wedding the movement's intellectual history with a study of its globalist theory, Slobodian takes us beyond the commonplaces of neoliberalism—for example, the Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS), the Chicago School of Economics, the Washington Consensus, and the Thatcher and Reagan “revolutions”—to tell a story with a European focus and global scope. He ably guides us from the offices of the Lower Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the 1910s to the halls of the World Trade Organization a century later. Demonstrating that neoliberals emphasized the “encasement” of the world economy to protect private property rights from the disintegrative potential of democratic governance and national sovereignty, he effectively dismantles the most stubborn characterization of neoliberalism as a virulent strain of “market fundamentalism.” Instead, neoliberals sought “the meta-economic or extra-economic conditions for safeguarding capitalism at the scale of the entire world” (2). Slobodian trains his gaze on the institutional theorizing and institution building through which figures like Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Gottfried Haberler, Michael Heilperin, Wilhelm Röpke, and Jan Tumlir, *inter alia*, achieved an “ordoglobal” vision of “thinking in orders” (4) at the world level.

Although *Globalists* begins in post-World War I Vienna and Austrian School economists dominate the proceedings (Hayek, Mises, and Haberler, as well as close Austrian allies Röpke and Lionel Robbins), Slobodian selects the lesser known ‘Geneva School’ as the protagonist in his account of neoliberal globalism. It was the figures who worked and conferred in the Swiss city, Slobodian contends, who labored most consistently at solving “the riddle of postimperial order” (9), including the twin problems of the democratization of the world and the politicization of the economic sphere. Geneva School thinkers faced these challenges across the ruptures of the Great War, the Great Depression, and the revolt of the Global South in the 1970s. Slobodian opens his account with the work of Austrian scholars with the International Chamber of Commerce, as they fought against the nationalist tendencies of the 1920s, exemplified by persistent tariff walls that impeded the open world economy. Working with the League of Nations in the 1930s, the neoliberals then combated economic nationalism through business cycles and statistical projects.

Denying the possibility that state planners or economists could comprehend the complexity of the world economy, Mises, Hayek, Haberler, and Röpke moved to protect the economic world (dominium) from state power (imperium). As the world descended into depression and then war, the Geneva School shifted attention to constructing supranational federations. Its disaffection with the ‘one-state, one-vote’ model of the United Nations and attendant organizations like the International Trade Organization led its members to mobilize the language of rights to protect property and capital through new investment codes. In the most compelling chapter, “The World of Races,” Slobodian follows the split within the Geneva camp over the relationship between the world economy and Western Christian values. Looking at the neoliberals’ fraught interpretations of apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, he shows that these thinkers struggled to balance their liberal ideals of cosmopolitanism and equality before the law with their fears of unconstrained democracy and demands for social justice. As decolonization threatened the global economic order, Geneva School members attempted to devise a new “constitutional model”—exemplified (for some) by the European Economic Community (EEC) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO—to secure market rights and economic protections for individuals and corporations. In all of these neoliberal developments, Geneva provided an invaluable vantage: “Looking at the century from Geneva...we see...the world economy needed laws that limited the autonomy of nations. We see a version of neoliberalism where the core value is not the freedom of the individual but the interdependence of the whole” (24).

*Globalists* marshals a breadth and depth of knowledge that distinguishes it from most studies of neoliberalism. Slobodian commands several large scholarly literatures to execute this project, most notably European intellectual history, international political economy (IPE), international relations (IR), and political geography. This mastery permits confident transitions between fine-grained analyses of MPS speeches and Global South politics, or cybernetics and the New International Economic Order (NIEO). He offers substantially revised readings of several of famous European intellectuals, especially Hayek and Mises, which are mandatory reading for scholars. He convincingly demonstrates why neoliberal scholarship that fixates on Anglo-American developments or economic (or economistic) ideas is short-sighted. In this way, he goes beyond many of the earlier studies on neoliberalism<sup>1</sup> and more recent ones on globalism.<sup>2</sup> He also indicates to historians how to deploy social scientific research, especially from IPE and IR, to evaluate the power and impact of ideas on the political and economic landscape.

The core methodological approach remains intellectual history, however, and several of Slobodian's choices invite further consideration. First is the relationship between the Austrian School and Geneva School. It is hard to shake the impression that this is really a story of the Viennese "world of yesterday" and a confirmation of Tony Judt's aperçu that neoliberalism was "imported to the US in the suitcases of a handful of disabused Viennese intellectuals."<sup>3</sup> Judt's and Slobodian's diagnoses of the present diverge, but they select the same Archimedean point. He builds his "Central European" story around "Hayek and his collaborators" (cf. 6-9), and he acknowledges that "the Geneva School combined the Austrian emphasis on the limits of knowledge and the global scale with the German ordoliberal emphasis on institutions and the moment of the political decision" (269). Ironically, Hayek himself has very little connection to Geneva. The introduction of the Geneva School as a new category of analysis is undoubtedly salutary for a reconceptualization of neoliberalism, but something may be lost in the shift of focus away from Austrian. For example, concentration on Habsburg and post-imperial Vienna may extend our temporal scope backward. One scholar has identified the Austrian School's earliest manifestation as "a school for learning and practicing statecraft,"<sup>4</sup> and the literature on the school's founder, Carl Menger, has emphasized the importance he assigned to institutions. The School's pre-WWI advisory work on the gold standard and taxation, and its social policy recommendations in the Society of Austrian Economists, aimed at reducing popular unrest and responding to the threat of democratic sovereignty. The debates on nationality and imperial reform around 1900, which influenced the supranational thinking of Mises and Hayek, provide a meaningful touchstone for the later imperial visions of the Geneva School neoliberals. Placing this globalist story into an Austrian frame could be

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown* (London: Verso, 2013); Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Tony Judt, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 30.

<sup>4</sup> Erich Streissler, "The Intellectual and Political Impact of the Austrian School of Economics," *History of European Ideas* 9:2 (1988), 197.

immensely beneficial, especially in the ways that Slobodian effectively challenges conventional pictures of Mises and Hayek.<sup>5</sup>

If the Austria-Geneva connection could be further clarified, the centrality of Geneva to the early ordoliberal project could also be amplified. Slobodian brilliantly recasts the famous Colloque Walter Lippman (CWL) as part of the world project of the Geneva-based International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) and its International Studies Conference (ISC). The CWL is often portrayed as the locus classicus of postwar neoliberalism, so this re-contextualization is of great import. Unfortunately, the interaction rituals of these organizations—and within the Geneva context more generally—remain opaque. Was Geneva formative for these individuals? None of the school members came from the city and few of them spent much time within the milieu. It is hard to see how Geneva changed any of their ideas, many of which had developed in other settings. For example, Hayek’s famous 1937 article suggests a transformation in his thought, yet it is not clear that the Geneva conferences were pivotal at all. Mises’s fundamental methodological and political ideas predate his 1934 move. The business cycle research at the heart of Chapter 2 owed more to the Rockefeller Foundation than Geneva (or the League). Moreover, how was the presence of liberal internationalists like Hans Kelsen (later one of Hayek’s *bêtes noires*) perceived? Slobodian gestures at a broader Genevan context, especially in his comments on William Rappard (94-5), but this could have been developed further.

As the above paragraphs suggest, it is hard to determine whether “Geneva School” is an analytic category, a historical-descriptive one, or both. Slobodian seems to imply that it serves both functions, yet the analytic category takes precedence, to the detriment of its historical specificity. Intergenerational transmission of ideas and institutional development do not receive detailed expression. The key figures in the EEC and GATT chapters—Hans von der Groeben, Ernst-Joachim Mestmäcker, Jan Tumlir, Frieder Roessler, Ernst-Ulrich Petersmann—appear to gain entry into the Geneva School simply because they thought in *Ordo* or Hayekian terms. Is that all the School was? Unlike their predecessors, who are presented with great detail and sophistication, these ‘second generation’ scholars seem one-dimensional. A more well-rounded portrayal of the intellectual world of latter-day ‘Genevans’ could enrich Slobodian’s picture.

Slobodian rightly takes the Geneva School to task for hiding asymmetries of power: “to disavow the existence or visibility of ‘economies’ themselves intentionally makes projects of social justice, equality, or redistribution unthinkable. But it does not make power disappear” (269). In an ironic twist, Slobodian’s even-handed and painstaking investigation of neoliberal globalism occasionally makes power disappear from his story. Obviously, the scholarship on neoliberalism is replete with scathing ideology critiques, from David Harvey and Naomi Klein to Philip Mirowski and Wendy Brown.<sup>6</sup> Slobodian takes the ideas of the Geneva School seriously and shows how they informed significant debates at GATT and the WTO. Yet ideological-political work loomed as large—probably larger—for neoliberals, even of the Geneva School. Hayek’s example is again

<sup>5</sup> On Mises, see Jörg-Guido Hülsmann, *Mises: Last Knight of Liberalism* (Auburn: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2007). On Hayek, see Alan Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003). For a libertarian reading of them, see Brian Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007); Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown* (London: Verso, 2013); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone, 2015). See also Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, eds., *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

useful. Slobodian's last two chapters use *The Constitution of Liberty* and *Law, Legislation, and Liberty* as the bases of the Geneva School's response to the rise of modernization theory and the revolt of the Global South. The GATT/WTO response to the NIEO through multi-level governance structures demonstrated Hayek's "cybernetic legalism" (223-224). From Slobodian's telling, it would appear that Hayek and Geneva School neoliberalism attained a good degree of success. Looking at reviews of Hayek's works and Hayek's own correspondence, reactions appeared to be muted, if not downright disappointing. What are we to make of this? Why didn't Hayek perceive his "triumph"? Was he seeking a different kind of influence—say, among politicians and "second-hand dealers in ideas"? Slobodian's book is a necessary corrective to the reductive "thought collective" model that has enjoyed such broad approval, yet there must be a way to reconcile his intellectual-institutional approach with an ideological one.

None of the above observations detract from this book's triumph. This masterpiece demands extended reflection and discussion, to which these comments merely hope to contribute. It should be required reading for anyone interested in neoliberalism, the history of capitalism, and twentieth-century globalism. Slobodian tells a compelling global history of the twentieth century, chronicling the surprising victory of Geneva School neoliberalism (and its current crisis). Implicitly, he also speaks to our present, populist moment. In a piquant note, Slobodian suggests that Hayek should be considered alongside Karl Polanyi in his quest to re-embed markets within socio-political institutions (6). If the Polanyian and Hayekian solutions can be seen as twinned "double movements" against market fundamentalism, perhaps today's "alt-right" or "New Right" movement may not be the only populist movement to emerge from the current neoliberal (dis)order.



## Author's Response by Quinn Slobodian, Wellesley College

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Writing books is a funny thing. Before writing one, I would have assumed I'd hope for enthusiastic approval, strings of gold stars for all my points. But the truth is closer to a scan of each new review for the one that strikes home, that finds the neuralgic point in the argument I know is there—the jolt when the tongue's tip hits the rotten tooth. I am lucky enough here to receive long and thoughtful reviews from four scholars whose work I admire, along with a generous introduction by Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins. None quite struck that painful point—even if a few come close. I'll respond to selected points before writing a slender version of that best/worst review myself. Dentist, drill thyself.

The easiest point to concede is that there are topics I could have included but did not. Tehila Sasson points to the non-neoliberal visions of federation from the 1940s expertly documented by Or Rosenboim as well as those visions of *Eurafrique* and West African federation explored by Frederick Cooper.<sup>1</sup> Both debates appear but only at the margins. Branko Milanovic suggested in a review that the Austromarxist visions of federation are also important context for my protagonists.<sup>2</sup> Expanding the cast to flesh out the political alternatives arrayed against the one that I describe is essential; my best hope for the book is that it will join such a conversation. Recent work by Christy Thornton, Patricia Clavin, Eric Helleiner, Guy Fiti Sinclair, Vanessa Ogle, Matthias Schmelzer, Christopher Dietrich, Stephen Macekura—and Sasson herself—has already offer varied genealogies of social democratic and ecological globalism.<sup>3</sup>

Timothy Shenk's exegesis on early Chicago School economist Henry Simons seems to imply that this figure could also have been considered in relation to the Geneva School—except for the rather important absence of

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<sup>1</sup> Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Branko Milanovic, "Globalists: neoliberals in search of terrestrial empire," Global Inequality blog, 30 October 2018. <http://glineq.blogspot.com/2018/10/globalists-neoliberals-in-search-of.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Christy Thornton, "A Mexican International Economic Order? Tracing the Hidden Roots of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States," *Humanity* 9:3 (Winter 2018), Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), Eric Helleiner, *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), Guy Fiti Sinclair, *To Reform the World: International Organizations and the Making of Modern States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), Vanessa Ogle, "State Rights against Private Capital: The 'New International Economic Order' and the Struggle over Aid, Trade, and Foreign Investment, 1962-1981," *Humanity* 5:2 (Summer 2014): 211-234, Matthias Schmelzer, *The Hegemony of Growth: The OECD and the Making of the Economic Growth Paradigm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Christopher R.W. Dietrich, *Oil Revolution: Anticolonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), Stephen Macekura, *Of Limits and Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Tehila Sasson, "Milking the Third World? Humanitarianism, Capitalism, and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott," *American Historical Review* 121:4 (October 2016): 1196-224.



attention in Simons's work to the very questions of international, and multilevel order that unite the "globalists" of the book.

Janek Wasserman suggests that my discussion of the Austrian School could have gone backward from the 1910s rather than using the standard starting point of the interwar Mises Seminar used by Philip Mirowski, Jamie Peck, Johanna Bockman, Lawrence H. White, and others to pit Karl Polanyi and Oskar Lange against Mises and Hayek and suggest we are still echoing these debates "like light from a fading star," as Tony Judt put it.<sup>4</sup> This is no doubt true. The book's protagonists mostly saw the Habsburg Empire in the rosy glow of the rearview mirror. Wasserman's own forthcoming book will bring an historian's sense of context to the earlier debates explored by historians of economic thought like Bruce Caldwell and Karen Iversen Vaughn.<sup>5</sup>

Closer to the nerve are those criticisms that engage with the book's categories of analysis. Most pointed here is Adom Getachew's proposal that perhaps "neoliberal globalism was less a post-imperial project than a moment of empire's reinvention." She suggests that I do "not suggest a deep interconnection between neoliberalism and empire" and that I "do not make the case for the kind of deep imbrication between empire and neoliberalism [she is] suggesting." It is difficult to see how the book does not make case for a "deep interconnection between neoliberalism and empire" as this is literally its whole subject. The core thesis of the book—from the title onwards—is that neoliberalism was a political economic form that was proposed subsequent to empire to preserve many of empire's prerogatives—security of foreign investment, diminished sovereignty of receiving countries, treaties securing asymmetric privileges for wealthy countries, etc. Getachew's argument seems to be that neoliberalism and empire are not just "imbricated" but synonymous—that empire, in fact, never ended. Yet doesn't this claim sacrifice analytic precision for moral and rhetorical force? Given the fact that, legally speaking, we are in an era of formally self-determining nation-states, to deny the meaningfulness of the rupture of decolonization seems to obfuscate more than clarify. Kwame Nkrumah is cited in support but his category had the virtue of adding "neo" and thus signaling a new form—as I mention briefly in the book's last chapter—not simply a reiteration of the former state. Perhaps more provocative than the idea of neoliberal imperialism would be to revisit the phenomenon of liberal imperialism: empire itself always worked through an admixture of markets and force, opening up some collaborations while shutting down others. To borrow a formulation from Sasson, empire "cut both ways." Post-empire does too. Rejecting a change of label does not change the contents.

Wasserman, for his part, puts pressure on the category of the Geneva School. Is it an analytical or an historical-descriptive term, he asks. He sees correctly that I am using it as both and that some liberties are taken to make the latter work. To say there is a coherent Geneva School papers over the fact that only some of my actors spent extended periods of time in the Swiss city and also that large parts of their oeuvres were

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Judt, *Ill fares the land* (New York: Penguin Press, 2010), 153, Philip Mirowski, *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Johanna Bockman, *Markets in the name of socialism: the left-wing origins of neoliberalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), Lawrence H. White, *The Clash of Economic Ideas: The Great Policy Debates and Experiments of the Last Hundred Years* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Caldwell, *Hayek's Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F.A. Hayek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Karen Iversen Vaughn, *Austrian Economics in America: The Migration of a Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

unrelated to questions of international order. This is a plausible critique yet Wasserman could have found better evidence to make it. For example, he says that Hayek “had very little connection to Geneva” and that business cycle research “owed more to the Rockefeller Foundation than Geneva.” True, but it was the international coordination of business cycle research from Geneva that led Hayek to think about the place of the Austrian economy in its region and thus expand his thinking into international matters he had previously neglected. His lecture on “monetary nationalism and international stability,” was also presented at a lecture at William Rappard’s institute in Geneva—suggesting that the location was linked in his mind with matters of international order, alongside, of course, the British-based discussions around the New Commonwealth Institute that is explored in greater detail by Rosenboim. As for business cycle research, Haberler wrote his influential monograph on the topic with Rockefeller Foundation funding—but in Geneva—and it was published by the League of Nations. The “Haberler-style report” was a formative model, as I show, for both Röpke’s proposed Rockefeller-funded—and also Geneva-based—study on international economic disintegration and the “collective research” model of the Lippmann Colloquium and Mont Pelerin Society itself. Mises did write major works before moving to Geneva in 1934 but only turned to themes of international order and federation after arriving, being influenced by the ambient discussions of Clarence Streit and others.

On the second generation ordoliberal, Wasserman writes that “The key figures in the EEC and GATT chapters—Hans von der Groeben, Ernst-Joachim Mestmäcker, Jan Tumlir, Frieder Roessler, Ernst-Ulrich Petersmann—appear to gain entry into the Geneva School simply because they thought in Ordo or Hayekian terms.” Yet the latter three worked and taught in Geneva at the GATT for years in the run-up to the creation of the WTO—a rather concrete connection to the place, it would seem. What unites the others is not just interest in Hayek or ordoliberalism but, as I hope I make clear, the combination of unknowability and its linked focus on law with the problem of multilevel governance, in their case, the EEC. It is precisely this understanding that is “globalized” by the latter three in Geneva and they draw explicit connections to Mestmäcker, among others. So no, Geneva does not offer anything as stable as the Chicago or Virginia Schools, nor is it the Rosetta Stone that explains all of these thinkers’ breakthroughs from the socialist calculation debate through the knowledge problem and onward, but it offers a discrete vantage point for an alternative narration of the twentieth century where the needs of the world were put before those of any nation—a position even more striking in an age when major Atlantic leaders declare citizens of the world to be “citizens of nowhere.”

Two of the issues raised by Getachew and Sasson come closest to the fractures in the book to which I am returning in my current research. Getachew rightly pushes on the question of race. While I would defend the fact that race was, formally speaking, not a category of analysis for Hayek, Haberler, and the other central figures in the book, I would question my own segregation (to use an apt term) of Röpke as an anomaly. My research since completing the book has uncovered a line of argument much closer to Röpke’s within the group of neoliberal intellectuals. To give a preview, the Institute for Humane Studies hosted a “Symposium on Human Differentiation” in Gstaad in 1972. Among the presenters was MPS member and arch-libertarian Murray Rothbard, who presented a now famous essay titled “egalitarianism as a revolt against nature,” citing Richard J. Herrnstein’s argument about the heredity of IQ as a biological obstacle to achieving substantive social equality.<sup>6</sup> A quarter century later, Herrnstein published *The Bell Curve* with Charles Murray, himself a dependent of conservative free market think tanks who later became a Mont Pelerin Society member. One

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<sup>6</sup> Murray N. Rothbard, “Egalitarianism as a Revolt against Nature,” *Modern Age* (Fall 1973): 348-357.

storyline I am reconstructing follows what I call the “new fusionism” that coalesced after the 1960s to ground neoliberal claims in neo-naturalist doctrines of biology, psychology, and even revived racial science.

Sasson also raises a crucial point by way of Camilla Schofield’s deep and nuanced biography of Enoch Powell. Powell was himself an attendee of MPS meetings and a fierce defender of the gold standard. Both Sasson and Schofield are right that Powell turned to the nation in response to immigration, feeling the end of empire not as an abstract distant force but an intimate social-cultural confrontation. My new research reveals something unsurprising: the Geneva School faith in supranational institutions did not reign uncontested even within the neoliberal intellectual community. Powell is, in some ways, the intellectual godfather of the neoliberal Eurosceptics who proliferated in the shadow of what they feared to be a coming “Social Europe” under Jacques Delors’s leadership in the 1990s. The genealogies of the Brexiteers, the Alternative for Germany party, and the Austrian Freedom Party tie straight to a strain of neoliberal thought that distrusted the binding nature of supranational constitutional commitments and doubled down on the nation and its sovereignty as the surest means of defending their version of “the open society” with all of its capitalist freedoms.

Now to the un-poked tooth. Wasserman descries the irony that I ignore power myself even as I argue that neoliberal theory hides “asymmetries of power.” This all but hits the jolt in its gesture to David Harvey’s narration of neoliberalism as primarily about the restoration of class power.<sup>7</sup> But it doesn’t quite get there because it fails to name the real absence in my narrative: the question of finance. I apologize for the omission rather limply in the introduction and touch on it briefly in the last chapter. Yet without what Kari Polanyi-Levitt calls “the Great Financialization,” Greta Krippner calls the “rise of finance,” Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy call “capital resurgent,” or Helleiner calls “the reemergence of global finance,” the causal story I offer falls short.<sup>8</sup> After all, it was not actually critiques of the “internal contradictions” of the NIEO or the language of human rights, as Getachew suggests, that led to the neoliberal breakthrough in the 1980s that did not occur in the 1940s. The Volcker Shock in 1979 with the spike in interest rates that followed put the Global South at the mercy of Northern creditors and an IMF which had switched its *raison d’être* from managing a world of capital controls and fixed but adjustable exchange rates to rescuing financially imperiled nations at the cost of violently disruptive internal structural adjustment. It was finance and the techniques of financial governance that restored the whip hand of the Global North, leaving the door open only for those strategies from the Global South that aligned cleanly with the needs of the North.

In this sense, I can—and perhaps should—be faulted with following my characters too closely. I describe the thwarted attempt to lock in a “human right to capital flight” in the 1940s but not its success from the 1980s onward. I reproduce the blind spots of my protagonists, who saw the problem of global economic governance as primarily about regulating the flow of goods while neglecting (as they did) the flow of capital and leaving the flow of people to the discretion of nation states. Here Shenk’s reference to the global diffusion of

<sup>7</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Kari Polanyi-Levitt, *From the Great Transformation to the Great Financialization: On Karl Polanyi and Other Essays* (London: Zed, 2013), Greta R. Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: the Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *Capital Resurgent: Roots of the Neoliberal Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), Eric Helleiner, *States and the Reemergence of Global Finance: from Bretton Woods to the 1990s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

monetary policy is crucial. My story about the rise of global trade governance is only one part of a story waiting to be expanded, revised, and even displaced by the archivally grounded works in progress about central banking and international financial governance by scholars like Clara Mattei, Jamie Martin, Ogle, Onur Özgöde and others. The intellectual project will require collaboration—a mouth has many teeth.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Clara Mattei, “The Guardians of Capitalism. International Consensus and Fascist Technocratic Implementation of Austerity,” *Journal of Law and Society* 4:1 (2017), Jamie Martin, “Experts of the World Economy: European Stabilization and the Transformation of Global Capitalism in the Era of Total War” (Ph.D, Harvard University, 2016), Vanessa Ogle, “Archipelago Capitalism: Tax Havens, Offshore Money, and the State, 1950s–1970s,” *American Historical Review* 122:5 (2017): 1431-1458, Onur Özgöde, “Governing the Economy at the Limits of Neoliberalism: The Genealogy of Systemic Risk Regulation in the United States, 1922-2012” (Ph.D, Columbia University, 2015).