

In *Tradition and Discovery* 49.2 Martin Turkis [positively reviewed](#) economist J. Bradford DeLong's *Slouching Towards Utopia*, a book that details the history of the “long 20th century” by juxtaposing the ideological frames of F. A. Hayek and Karl Polanyi. In his review, Turkis notes that DeLong makes some references in the book to Michael Polanyi's life and work. The review also highlights three themes that Turkis would have liked to see figure more prominently:

1. A bit more attention to the widespread retrospective recognition that environmental destruction is endemic to industrialization.
2. More consideration of the ways in which the really-existing-socialism of the Soviet sphere may have given progressive reformers like FDR, civil rights activists, or those who engineered European social democracy the leverage necessary to overcome forces of reaction.
3. More analysis of the successful functioning of social democracies and also of the distinctions between social democracy and democratic socialism, given DeLong's position that social democracy represents the social apogee of the long 20th century.

DeLong was kind enough to respond with a note in response to the review, which we present below.

## A NOTE ON MICHAEL POLANYI AND *SLOUCHING TOWARDS UTOPIA*

**J. Bradford DeLong**

Thank you very much for reviewing *Slouching Towards Utopia*. I feel a few comments are in order here, both with respect to the role of Michael Polanyi in the context of my project and also in response to the three points made at the end of the *TAD* review.

First, Michael Polanyi is smarter and saw further than Friedrich von Hayek. I toyed with making the main axis of tension in the book an inter-family dispute, but in the end I decided that Hayek's name had much more resonance with potential readers. That may have been a mistake.

Regarding the three points summarized above, I'd say that

1. I think the environmental consequences of our industrial civilization are a major part of whatever the grand narrative of the 21st century will be. In fact, one reason for choosing 2010 as the ending point for the long 20th century is that the global-warming climate signal had not then fully emerged from the year-to-year weather-fluctuation noise.
2. I can't make up my mind whether the Soviet Union boosted the Western left (by driving people on the right to tell each other to be quiet in order to facilitate the construction of an anti-totalitarian popular front after WWII) or hobbled it (by setting the stage for a political landscape in which the claim that “all Democrats are commies” might find a foothold). So I dodged the question.
3. With respect to a deeper analysis of social democracy, I only had 600 pages! I felt I should spend more time on the decline of social democracy (which still puzzles me) than on the system at its apogee.

Again, thanks very much for your interest in *Slouching Towards Utopia*.