

masterpiece – in the old sense that Morris attributed to the craftsmanship of medieval guilds or the arts brotherhoods.[12] The author, finally, dares to make a new history of humanity, let us say, which puts the homonymous *Sapiens*[13] in a position that – shall we say it? – is not at all very flattering. For those who had not read this book, we will leave just one clue of its significance: one of its main theses is that wheat colonized *Sapiens*, and not the other way around. In the very own words that concluded the same alluring article written by Vygotsky:

In this sense, Engels, who had examined the process of evolution from the ape to man, said that it is work which created man. Proceeding from this, one could say that new forms of work will create the new man and that this new man will resemble the old kind of man, “old Adam”, in name only, the same way as, according to Baruch Spinoza’s great assertion, a “dog”, the barking animal, resembles the heavenly constellation named “Dog”.[14] If the readers who love both domestic animals’ milieus and outer-space settings allow us, the rather friendly pet is, to the epic astral conformation, what the *Sapiens* compiling is to *The Story of Work* oeuvre. Lucassen’s new edition makes it feasible, finally, to aim higher: the author does not compromise popular reach with any erudite depths but combines both. In one single verdict: there is no work without humans, there are no humans without work.

Notes:

- 1 Prolegomena for a Global Labour History, Org. by M. van der Linden and J. Lucassen, Amsterdam 1999.
- 2 G. Lukács, *The Ontology of the Social Being* [1964–1970], London 1978.
- 3 J. Bellamy Foster, *The Return of Nature: Socialism and Ecology*, London 2020.
- 4 I. Mészáros, *Beyond Capital: Towards a Theory of Transition*, London 1995.
- 5 F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature* [1876], London 1939.
- 6 S. J. Gould, *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History*, London 1977.
- 7 K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* [1844], London 1959.
- 8 L. Vygotsky, *The Socialist Alteration of Man* [1930], in: *Vygotsky Reader*, ed. by R. van der Veer and J. Valsiner, London 1994, pp. 175–184.
- 9 K. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Ethnicity, Nationality, and Non-western Societies*, Chicago 2016.
- 10 W. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. IV, Cambridge, MA 2006.
- 11 Among others E. Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*, London 2017.
- 12 W. Morris, *News from Nowhere and Selected Writings and Designs*, ed. by A. Briggs, London 1986.
- 13 Y. Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, London 2015.
- 14 Vygotsky, *The Socialist Alteration*, p. 183.

Julian Germann: Unwitting Architect: German Primacy and the Origins of Neoliberalism, (Emerging Frontiers in the Global Economy), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021, 304 pp.

Reviewed by
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When German reunification between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic suddenly appeared possible in late 1989, leading Western European politicians feared the power of unified Germany. Germany could become too powerful on the inter-

national stage to be just one among equals with the other larger European nations like France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. This fear did not come to pass, at least not in the 1990s. However, since the so-called Euro Crisis and particularly since the outbreak of all-out war in Ukraine, the question of German leadership has come to the forefront. German actors – be they from politics or the scholarly community – tend to underestimate German influence and power potential. This is best exemplified by the recent comments of the German minister of the chancellery, Wolfgang Schmidt, who said that Germany is still a “teenager” when it comes to questions of foreign security.[1]

What (West) German actors were slightly more aware of in the post-war period was the economic power of their country. How politicians and state representatives used this power to shape the world economic order – particularly from the 1970s on – is at the centre of Julian Germann’s book. Germann sees the 1970s as pivotal for the end of the “embedded” liberal international economic order marked by the compromise between labour and capital. This order was dismantled in the 1970s and replaced by neo-liberalism, which the author equates with an attack on the welfare state and organized labour in favour of capital. Germann therefore follows a “traditional” definition of neo-liberalism that had already been popular in the 2000s but came increasingly under pressure in the last years by authors relying more on historical than sociological research methods. Germann shortly reflects on this newer research but largely rejects it and sticks to the centrality of the 1970s for the beginning of neo-liberalism.

Germann’s addition to the branch of literature on neo-liberalism focusing on the 1970s is the fresh look on allegedly minor and non-Anglo-Saxon actors in the emergence of a new socioeconomic order. His main argument is that (West) German actors have been central for the success of neo-liberal globalization. (West) Germany has been an “unwitting architect” of neo-liberalism because, by trying to preserve the compromise between labour and capital at home, it contributed decisively to the shift from “embedded” to neo-liberal capitalism in other parts of the world. The policy measures taken to insulate Germany from the multiple crises of the 1970s and preserve its export-oriented economic model as well as social peace at home finally came back to hurt Germany in the 2000s.

The book is structured into seven chapters. While the first chapter deals with debates on neo-liberalism within international relations as a subbranch of political sciences, the second chapter sets the analytical stage for looking at the case of Germany. The author continues by taking a long-term view on the development of the German economy since the onset of industrialization. In the fourth chapter the author directly challenges the view that the demise of the Bretton Woods system was due to a political move by US elites to preserve the power of a hegemon in decline. Here, the author’s main argument comes in regarding the role of West Germany. The fifth chapter focuses on the effect on the wider world by the coping mechanism chosen in West Germany to deal with the crises of the 1970s. In the sixth chapter, the author argues that German policy-makers were able to exact pressure on US elites

to commit the USA to monetary and fiscal policies in alignment with the preferences of their West German counterparts. In the final chapter, the author focuses on the post-1989 period. The insistence of German elites to rely on their established export-focused model, combined with structural changes in the world economy, contributed to the transformation of Europe. According to the author, Europe has become a supply zone to assure the competitiveness of the German manufacturing sector on the global market, particularly with regard to China.

The author makes very strong claims in the book. It is a bit overstated that German actors were pivotal for bringing down the Bretton Woods system, Eurocommunism in Italy and France, the left wing of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom, efforts for a new international economic order within the United Nations, and pushing the Federal Reserve Bank against its will into the "Volcker Shock". Although (West) Germany had been one of the world's largest economies in the 1970s/1980s (and still is), such strong claims risk to push the debate to the opposite extreme: instead of looking at Anglo-Saxon actors and neglecting the agency of the rest of the world, the author looks at German actors and likely underestimates the agency of other international players. Furthermore, there are some methodological issues that are debatable. The book constitutes an interdisciplinary effort by a political scientist who incorporates history and economics in his analysis. That is by itself laudable. However, it is also a risky undertaking. Seen from a historian's and an economist's perspective, there are a few deficiencies. From an economist's point

of view, for example, the use of the terms *Keynesianism* and *neo-liberalism* as opposites is hardly reconcilable with economic sciences. From a historian's point of view, to talk of the 1970s as a perpetual crisis in stark terms is not in tune with research or is at least one sided.[2]

The author uses loaded language in a way that is in the end harming his own agenda. It is in some passages of the book difficult to see the scholar behind the activist. The author makes it very clear that he wished for another outcome of the 1970s and a victory of conceptions for an alternative global economic order. There is nothing wrong with that. Nevertheless, it is irrelevant for the reader and becomes irritating when repeated several times in a lamenting way. Unfortunately, this is a feature of a considerable part of research literature that deals with neo-liberalism. In the end, it is self-defeating because the language used at least indirectly assumes that the audience of the book consists of "true believers". However, people who are already convinced by the methodology used and the argument presented beforehand do not need to be persuaded and thus do not need to read the book. All those who could be persuaded will find it more difficult than necessary because of the way the argument is presented.

That the author is pushing his argument too far in some respect does not imply that he is totally wrong. He clearly has a point when he criticizes political and historical scholarship that focuses too narrowly on the USA and UK as prime actors on the world stage. He is by and large right when he criticizes that German scholarship, on purpose or not, is belittling the influence of Germany as an international actor

in the post-war period. The value of the book lies in these rightful criticisms and the call for an interdisciplinary debate on socioeconomic change in the 1970s and thereafter.

Notes:

- 1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/13/putins-war-on-ukraine-part-of-crusade-against-liberal-democracy-says-scholz> (accessed 11 May 2023).
- 2 See, e.g., N. Ferguson (ed.), *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, Cambridge, MA 2010. Outside the USA and UK, the 1970s were not necessarily perceived as crisis driven, and also within the USA and UK, the view differs depending on the social group that one looks at.

Pamela Ballinger: *The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundation of Postwar Italy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020, 305 pp.

Reviewed by
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From 1943 to 1947, the Italian city of Syracuse was a well-known departure point for “small-boat operators smuggling migrants” to Libya (p. 114). The illegal migrants were Italian settlers clandestinely returning to the former Italian colony they had left during the war. The British military government ruling Libya at that time was unwilling to let them return and eventually deported most of them back to Italy. This small anecdote may illustrate the complex history of forced migration at the end of World War II, mainly from

the lost empire to Italy. Apart from Italians from the colonies in Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, large groups of Italians came from former Italian-ruled territories ceded to Albania, Yugoslavia, and Greece (the Dodecanese islands). These transfers were not fast and direct “return” movements home but long and complex migrations of people who did not all regard Italy as “home”. Pamela Ballinger succeeds in bringing all this together and embedding it in the post-war history of refugees and decolonization in a rich and dense monograph.

Bringing the often separated movements of Italian migrants into one frame, Ballinger’s argument addresses, firstly, Italian historiography: post-war Italy was made by the post-war refugee situation and the long and complicated decolonization (p. 18). Italian decolonization was not abrupt and uneventful but rather a complex, entangled, uneven, and ongoing process. Decolonization is a crucial aspect in post-war Italy for issues of citizenship, the position of foreign refugees, and even the built environment (p. 20). Ballinger’s innovation is to bring all the Italian “national refugees” into one narrative, including those from the adjacent territories ceded to Yugoslavia and Albania as well as the returning colonists from Libya and “Italian East Africa”. While not claiming their sameness, she convincingly shows that the different refugees “rubbed elbows” (p. 212) in the same institutions and struggled for support and recognition. As in national historiography, lasting hierarchies developed between the different groups.

The second contribution of Ballinger’s book is towards the history of post-war international refugees: “Italy served as a