

Slouching Towards Utopia

- An Economic History of the Long 20th Century, 1870-2010
- by J. Bradford DeLong
- <https://bit.ly/3pP3Krk>
- From Basic/Hachette

The Economic Pie



“Technology”

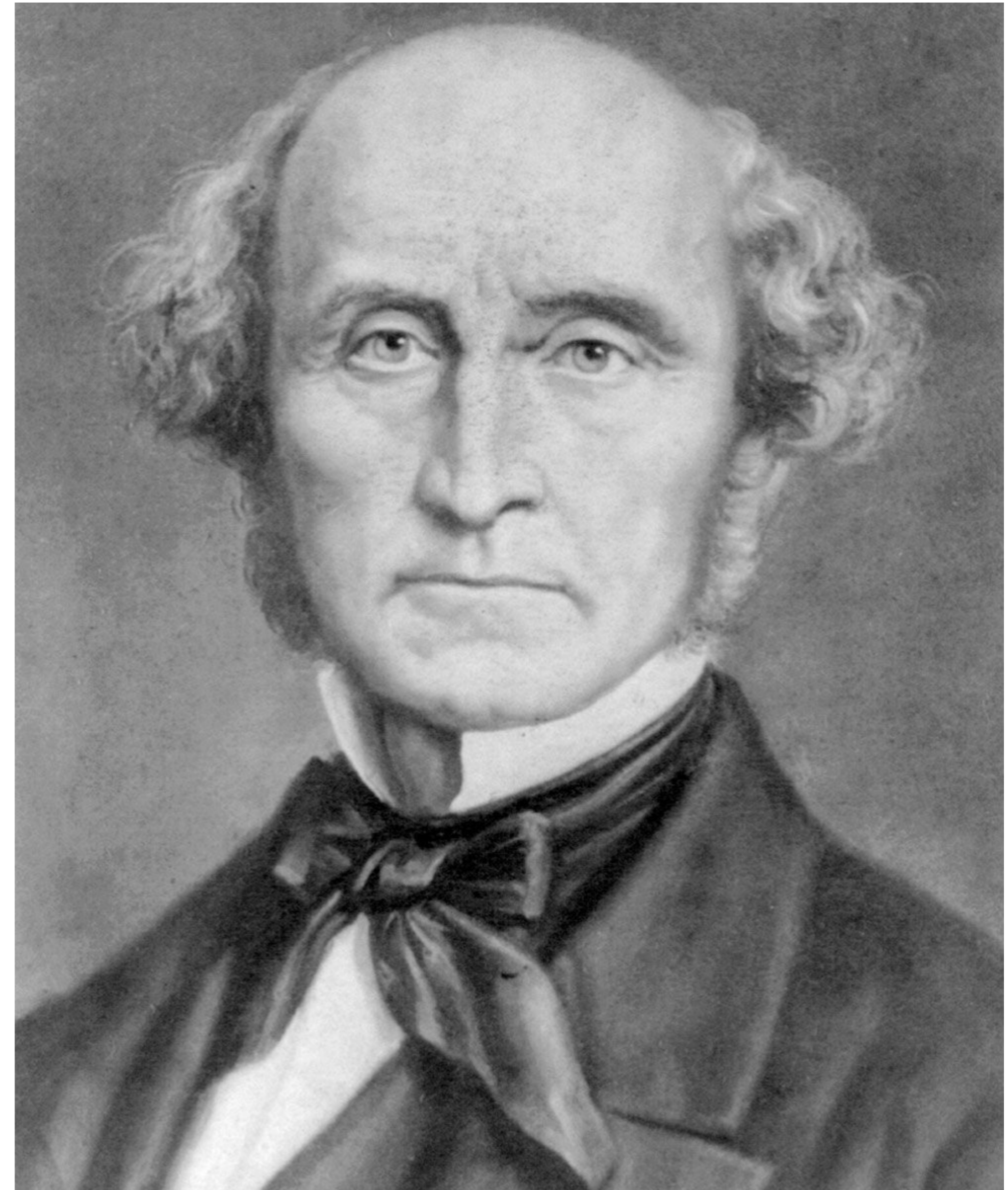
Date	Technological Ideas-Stock Growth Rate h	Technological Ideas Stock Level H (1870 = 1)	Average Annual Real Income per Capita y	Total Human Population P (millions)	Total Real World Income Y (billions)
-48000	0.002%	0.011	\$1,200	0.2	\$0.24
-8000	0.003%	0.036	\$1,200	2	\$2.4
-6000	0.009%	0.043	\$900	5	\$4.5
-3000	0.018%	0.074	\$900	15	\$14
-1000	0.030%	0.136	\$900	50	\$45
150	0.060%	0.272	\$900	200	\$180
800	0.014%	0.297	\$900	240	\$216
1500	0.052%	0.429	\$900	500	\$450
1770	0.149%	0.643	\$1,100	750	\$825
1870	0.442%	1.000	\$1,300	1300	\$1,690
2010	2.159%	20.557	\$11,600	6900	\$80,040

- Technology:
 - $H = y\sqrt{P}$
 - $H_{1870} = 1$
- Why the $\sqrt{\quad}$?
- What alternatives?



John Stuart Mill

Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being. They have enabled a greater population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number of manufacturers and others to make fortunes... [and] increased the comforts of the middle classes...



Schumpeterian Creative Destruction, Again & Again...

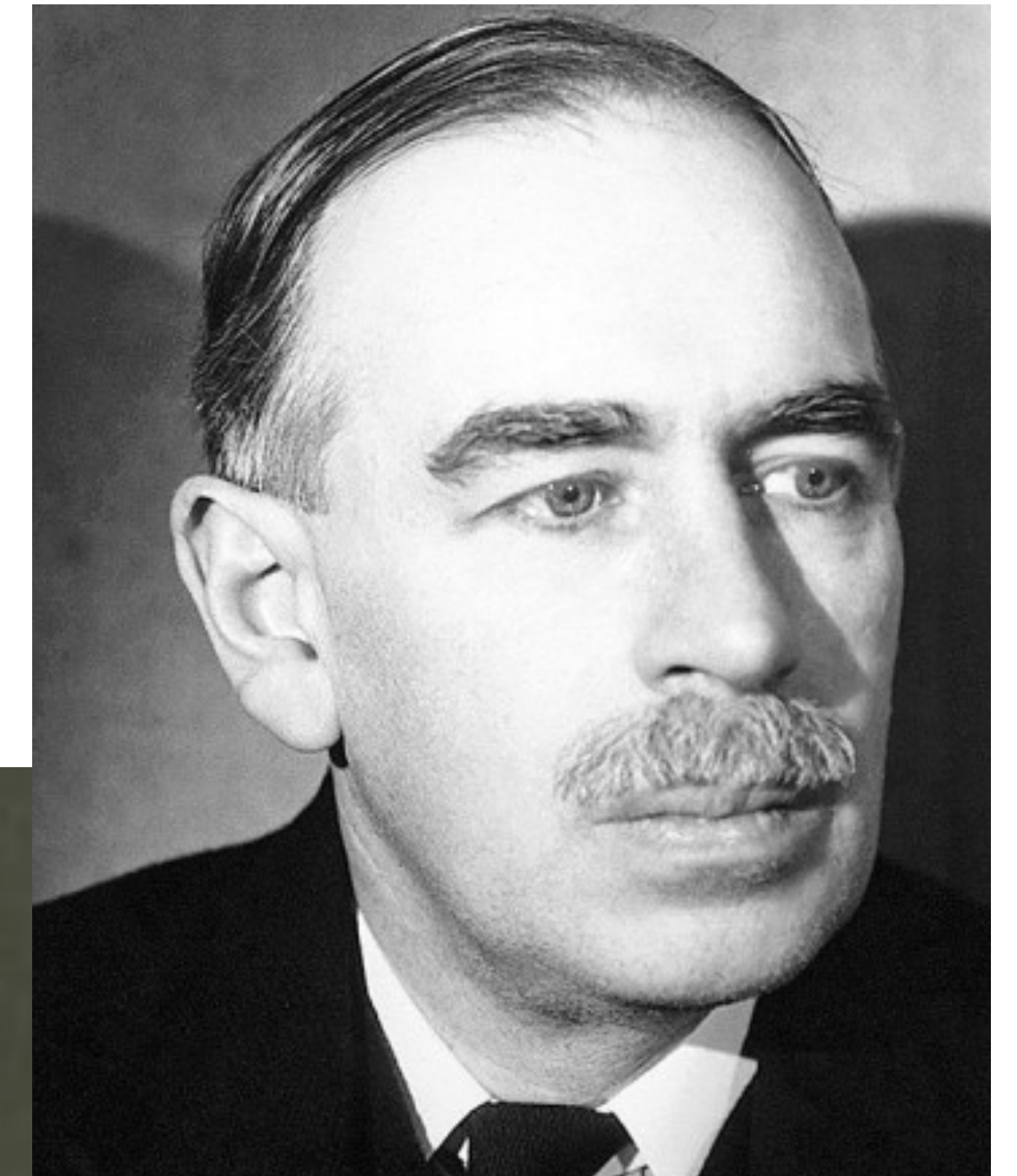


But Where Is Our Utopia?

- Human technological prowess doubling every generation
- Enormous wealth created—solving the problem of baking
- But industries, occupations, styles of life, communities destroyed
- The forces-of-production hardware base fundamentally transformed every generation...
- The cobbled-together sociological-political-economic-cultural running-code software superstructure no longer works
 - Bugs and crashes
 - Need to rewrite the superstructure on the fly—with substantial, but limited success

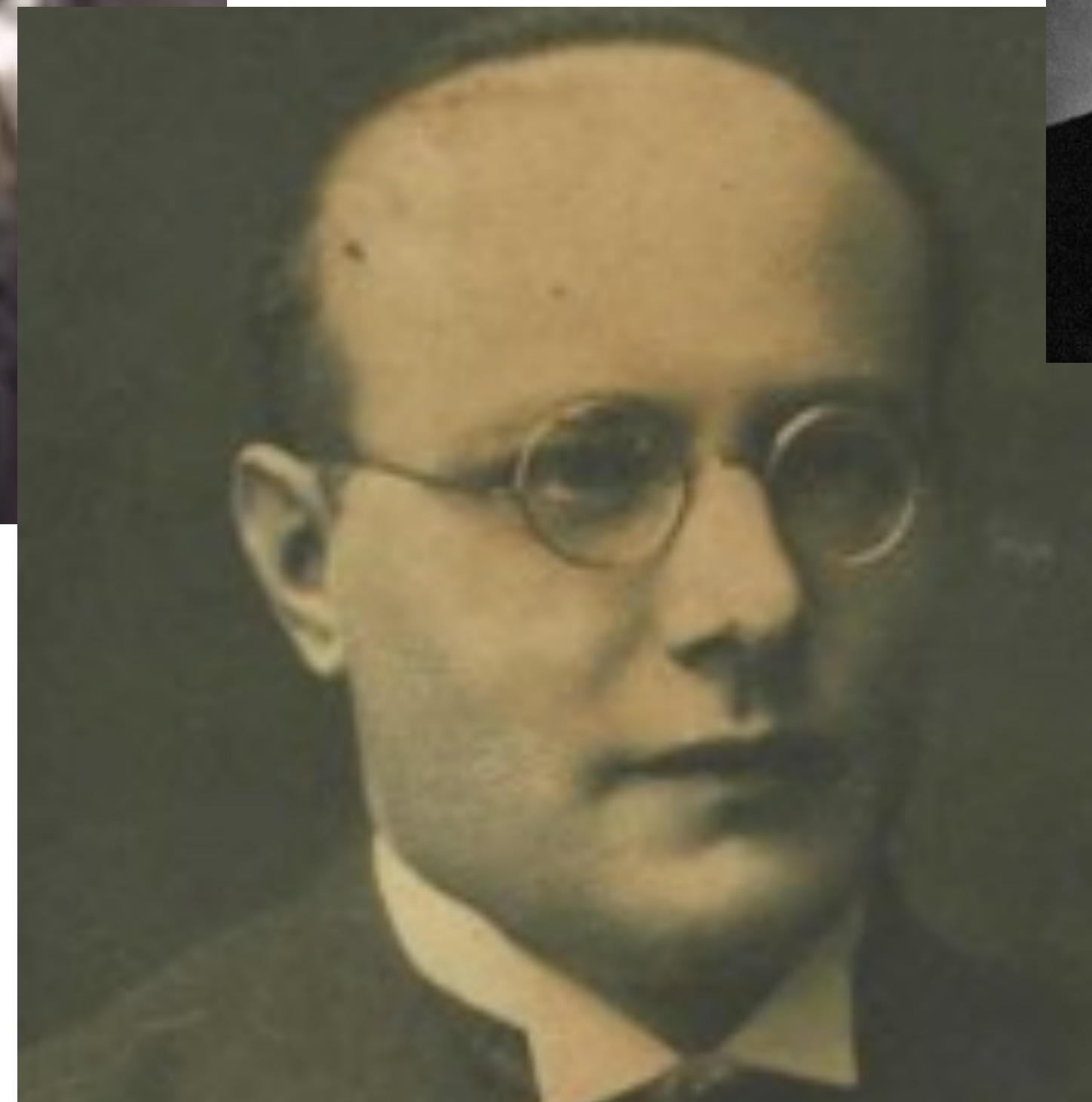
von Hayek, Polanyi, & Keynes

“The market giveth;
the market taketh
away: blessed be the
name of the
market...”



vs.

“The market was
made for man, not
man for the
market...”



Orders & Modes

A political-orders view:

- Gunpowder Empires, 1450-1770
- Age of Revolutions, 1770-1870
- Pseudo-Classical Semi-Liberal Order, 1870-1914
- WWI & Failed Reconstruction, 1914-1929
- The Great Depression & WWII, 1929-1945
- New Deal Order, 1945-1975
- Neoliberal Order, 1975-2010
- ???, 2010-?

A modes-of-production view

- 1500: Gunpowder-Empire Mode
- 1870: Steampower Mode
- 1903: Global Oil-Electricity-Chemicals Mode
- 1936: Mass Production Mode
- 1970: Mass Consumption—“Fordist”—Mode
- 2003: Global Value-Chain Mode
- 2036: Information-Bio Economy Mode?

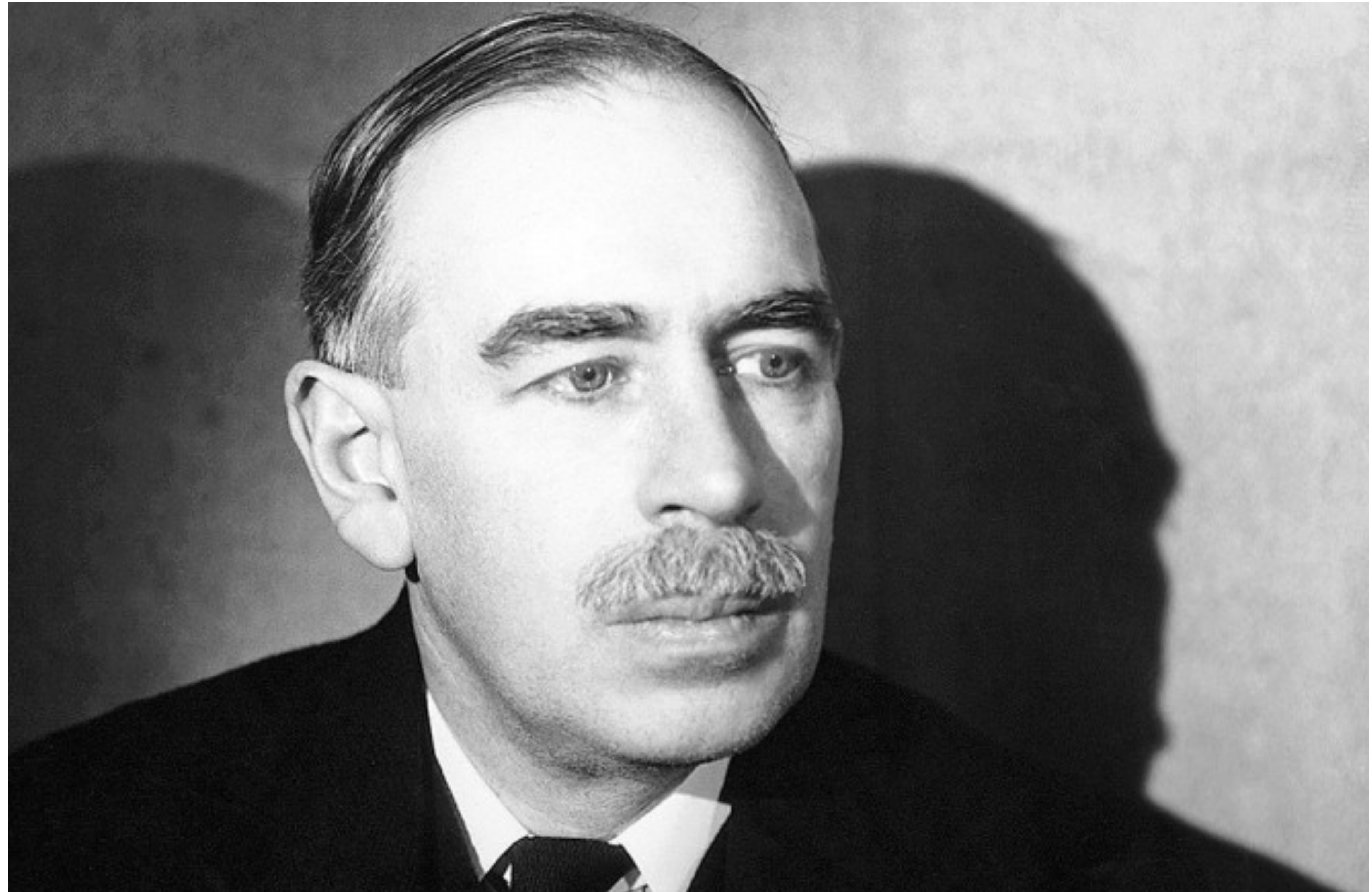
Why So Much Ethno-Nationalist Fear & Rage?

Neoliberalism Promised Many Things:

- But, in the Global North, at least, it did not deliver on any of them...
- Save for its promise to make the rich richer...
- So why is it so stubbornly persistent?

John Maynard Keynes, Again

[That] assumes... a plan exists.... [But] we lack more than usual a coherent scheme of progress, a tangible ideal. All the political parties alike have their origins in past ideas and not in new ideas.... No one has a gospel. The next move is with the head...



Other Books I Might Have Written...

- The Michael Polanyi book.
- The David Landes book.
- The Joseph Schumpeter book.
- The John Maynard Keynes book
- The reacting-to-“Red-Vienna” books:
 - The Karl Polany book.
 - The Friedrich von Hayek book.
 - The Peter Drucker book.
 - The Karl Popper book.

Kindleberger : Minsky :: DeLong : Polanyi

- Minsky was a genius
- Minsky wrote *terribly*
- Polanyi was a genius
- Polanyi writes...
- Kindleberger showed how you could use Minsky's frameworks of analysis to understand stuff...

What Is Wrong with This Book?

- In what ways is its pseudo-neo-Polanyiesque Grand Narrative insufficient?