Economics and Philosophy, **22** (2006) 113–114 Copyright © Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S0266267105000726

SYMPOSIUM ON *GLOBALIZATION AND JUSTICE*: INTRODUCTION

Kai Nielsen, Humanity Books, 2003, 378 pages

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For over half a century in more than a dozen books and 600 philosophical articles Kai Nielsen has developed and defended a radically egalitarian theory of social justice as well as a political vision demanding a democratic, humane form of socialism and, on an international level, a federative world socialist government embodying these values. In *Globalization and Justice* Nielsen applies his acute analytical abilities and his substantive theories and views to the present ongoing reality of corporate, capitalist globalization, arguing that this sort of globalization is unjust in that it further disadvantages the developing world. He then argues for an alternative sort of globalization, a process that he believes could and should have, as its end goal, a democratic and humane socialist government and society on a world-wide scale. Along the way he compares his theory and vision to those of such other major contemporary thinkers as John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, G.A. Cohen, and Richard Rorty representing, respectively, liberal egalitarianism, critical theory, analytical Marxism (at least formerly), and post-modern eclecticism.

In the present symposium concerning this work, Kok-Chor Tan, David Reidy, and Jon Mandle offer some prescient criticisms of Nielsen's positions, theories, and arguments. Tan's essay concentrates on the question of whether Nielsen successfully integrates his commitment to cosmopolitanism (which requires that we give equal consideration to all, regardless of nationality) with his liberal nationalism (which would seem to require that we give special consideration to compatriots). In *Globalization and Justice* Nielsen treats priority for compatriots as a matter for non-ideal theory (in applying ideal theory to the non-ideal world) rather than a principle that must be taken into consideration at the level of ideal theory (as fellow cosmopolitans Charles Beitz and Henry Shue advocate). "Nielsen prefers to treat priority for compatriots as a human failing that should not influence how justice ideally should be conceived" (p. 117, this volume). Although Tan agrees with Nielsen's view of this

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266267105000726 Published online by Cambridge University Press

issue under the present circumstances of the (economic and political) domination of some nations by others, he argues that "this does not show that priority of compatriots as such is morally objectionable". Indeed, Tan argues, any adequate theory of justice – either national or international – must take special national attachments into consideration (at even the ideal level of theory).

Reidy finds himself in disagreement both with whether Nielsen has "correctly set out the demands of justice" and "correctly described [contemporary] globalization and its effects" (p. 127). Reidy rejects Nielsen's demand for social and economic inequality that goes beyond the fulfillment of Rawls's difference principle, as do I.[1] He also argues, along with Tan and others, that our obligations to compatriots are stronger than our obligations to non-compatriots, at least beyond providing a certain social minimum to everyone. Finally, Reidy challenges Nielsen's empirical claim that only a democratic form of world (market) socialism can meet this social minimum and other legitimate demands of justice, holding – with Rawls – that a sufficiently egalitarian form of capitalism (or what Rawls calls "property-owning democracy") can meet these standards as well or better than such a world socialist society.

Mandle argues that Nielsen does not provide a sufficiently clear vision of global socialism. He also argues that market socialism – as described by Nielsen – may be no better than capitalism at reducing inequality or domination between societies or "do anything directly to reduce environmental degradation, the disruption of cultural identities, or illiteracy" (p. 142). This is one area where Nielsen's analysis and arguments could profitably be supplemented by those of David Schweickart, whose description of market socialism not only contains worker control of most large-scale enterprises (which would *not* be inherently expansionistic) but also social control of investment decisions and the possibility of a "socialist tariff" system to ensure truly fair trade between nations.[2]

Whether Nielsen adequately rebuts these criticisms in his "Response" is left up to the reader to decide.

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[1] See Peffer (1990:422–33; 1992; 2001).
[2] See Schweickart (1993; 2002).

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