
Dan Griswold tours in promotion of *Mad about Trade* Free Trade's Tireless Crusader

If there is any area of policy that ought to be settled, it's the economic benefits from unrestricted free trade. Adam Smith made the case convincingly the same year America declared its independence, but almost two and a half centuries later there are still those who would use protectionism to shackle the many for the benefit of the few.

Free trade remains a message every bit as worth fighting for today as it was in 1776. Daniel Griswold's book *Mad about Trade: Why Main Street America Should Embrace Globalization* has been both a hit for the Cato Institute and an important salvo in this fight. First reviewed in the November/December 2009 issue of *Cato Policy Report*, *Mad about Trade* presents a clear-eyed, optimistic, and accessible argument for the virtues of open and unencumbered trade. *Publishers Weekly* praised the book for explaining "the complicated mechanisms of world trade with brisk, easy-to-read prose."

The story of this significant book did not end with its publication, however. In

the months since its release, Griswold, the Cato Institute's director of trade policy studies, visited sites along the West Coast, as well as the Carolinas, New England, San Francisco, San Diego, Florida, and Chicago, speaking to student groups, think tank scholars, and concerned citizens. And even when he couldn't appear in person, Griswold spread the book's message through 10 radio appearances, from *Bob Harden's Morning Edition* on WGUF in Naples, Florida, to the *David Boze Show* on KTTH in Seattle, Washington, to the *Mike McConnell Show* on WLW in Cincinnati, Ohio. Among all this, Griswold wrote frequent *Mad about Trade*-related editorials in newspapers, magazines, and journals.

"Americans are bombarded everyday with misinformation about free trade from populists on the left and the right. *Mad about Trade* challenges the critics on their own turf," says Griswold. "The book tour has allowed me to explain how free trade affirms basic American values of compassion and fairness, competition and freedom, progress and peace."



Daniel Griswold speaks about his book *Mad about Trade: Why Main Street America Should Embrace Globalization* in December at the Yankee Institute for Public Policy in Connecticut.

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just say "Our government sucks and we have to deal with it." And that may be the place where we all end up. Tim, at the end of his book (as all political books must do), makes some targeted suggestions for reform, and he also makes a broader point about the spirit that the Republican party—if it is a conservative, free market, limited government party—should have in the age of Obama. It's a spirit of "libertarian populism." I think that's exactly right. I'm less of a libertarian than Tim myself, but I think libertarian populism is, in fact, the appropriate, American response to the frankly extreme marriage of government and business that has taken place in the last couple of years. (Of course this has been going on for decades, but it is a pretty astonishing state of affairs when you have the government essentially running the nation's largest auto manufacturer, its

largest insurance company, its largest banks, and so forth.) So I think that spirit is exactly right. You see it in the Tea Party movement and in politicians who are trying to harness the Tea Party movement (or be harnessed by it). I think that's healthy.

There are two problems with trying to implement libertarian populism, though. First, which is something Tim gets into in the book, is that Democrats may be becoming America's *other* party of business, but the idea of taking sides against corporate America is still foreign to many Republicans. The second problem—a deeper and longer-term problem for partisans of limited government—is that the most successful arguments that are being made by conservatives against the Obama administration's proposals tend to be defenses of middle-class entitlements. So the only way you could imagine an American government that simultane-

ously lives up better to the ideals that Tim is speaking about and does some of the necessary things that Professor Reinhardt is talking about, is a much more rigorously means-tested welfare state. That is something that the free-market side of the argument should be supporting. But, in fact, the free-market party in America oscillates wildly between sweeping denunciations of big government, on the one hand, and support for existing middle-class entitlements on the other. So, in the long run, even if some particular victories on regulatory fronts are won, if you look at the trajectory of government spending and government power in the United States over the next 50 years, it's all driven by entitlements. There's a great danger that the Tea Party movement, libertarian populism, and so forth could win some short-term battles, but use tactics that cause them to lose the larger war.