German
Historical
Institute
London

German Historical Institute London Bulletin

ARTICLE

Fascism and Finance: Economic Populism in Inter-War Europe
by Alexander Nützenadel

German Historical Institute London Bulletin
Vol. XLIV, No. 1 (May 2022), 3–27

ISSN 0269-8552

ARTICLES

FASCISM AND FINANCE: ECONOMIC POPULISM IN INTER-WAR EUROPE

Alexander Nützenadel

In 1931 Germany experienced the worst banking crisis in its history. One of the largest German banks, the Darmstädter und Nationalbank (Danat), filed for insolvency and the entire financial system collapsed within a few weeks. A banking panic broke out on 13 July and banks closed for three weeks. International investors withdrew their loans, the German government had to suspend international payments, and the major banks were temporarily nationalized.[1]

On 7 August—only a few days after the bank panic—the German chancellor Heinrich Brüning travelled to Rome, where he met with Benito Mussolini and other fascist leaders. Symbolically, this was a highly significant event, as it was the first state visit of a German chancellor to the Duce. The meeting generated huge—and mostly positive—publicity in Germany and Italy, as well as in the international press. The *New York Times* associated Brüning's visit to Rome with a 'feeling of optimism', and Mussolini was expected to use the meeting 'to bring up his aspiration to take a leading role in recovery from depression'.[2]

Brüning was deeply impressed by the Italian dictator, especially by his economic expertise. He noted in his diary that the Duce was

This is the lightly revised text of my Gerda Henkel Lecture, held at the GHIL on 24 November 2021. Johanna Biedermann, Eva-Maria Kaiser, Hanna-Sophie Klasing, and Tobias Scheib provided valuable research assistance. I am greatly indebted to Felix Römer for his critical comments

[1] For a detailed account of the German banking crisis, see Karl E. Born, *Die Deutsche Bankenkrise 1931: Finanzen und Politik* (Munich, 1967).
[2] *New York Times*, 7 Aug. 1931, 10.

particularly well informed about all economic matters and could readily cite statistics on trade, unemployment, and finance.[3] Discussions revolved around bilateral preference treaties and other measures against the depression. Mussolini promised Brüning that he would support Germany's aspirations to establish a customs union with Austria in the face of resistance from the French government. It was also agreed that Italy, which was itself in the process of nationalizing its banking system, would send economic advisers to Germany.[4] Highly satisfied, Brüning returned to Berlin. Five years before the Axis between Germany and Italy was sealed, an informal rapprochement had begun to take shape in the field of economic policy.[5]

The question of whether and how economic factors contributed to the rise of fascism is as old as fascism itself. In the view of contemporary Marxists, fascism was nothing more than the product of the crises of financial capitalism. While this linear causality has been rejected by most historians, cultural and social history has dominated research for many decades.[6] Only recently have economic historians redirected their attention to the Great Depression and its political effects, often inspired by the financial crisis of 2008 and the search for

[3] Heinrich Brüning, *Memoiren 1918–1934* (Stuttgart, 1970), 355–7; see also Wolfgang Schieder, *Mythos Mussolini: Deutsche in Audienz beim Duce* (Munich, 2013), 161–2 and 247–8.

[4] See report by Foreign Minister Julius Curtius, Nr. 440: 'Ministerbesprechung vom 10. August 1931, 11 Uhr', in Tilman Koops (ed.), *Akten der Reichskanzlei: Weimarer Republik. Die Kabinette Brüning I und II (1930–1932)*, 3 vols. (Boppard am Rhein, 1982–90), vol. ii: *1. März 1931 bis 10. Oktober 1931* (1982), 1546–52; see also Julius Curtius, *Sechs Jahre Minister der deutschen Republik* (Heidelberg, 1948), 222–5.

[5] Per Tiedtke, *Germany, Italy and the International Economy 1929–1936: Co-Operation or Rivalries at Times of Crisis?* (Marburg, 2016); on the evolution of the Axis, see Jens Petersen, *Hitler–Mussolini: Die Entstehung der Achse Berlin–Rom, 1933–1936* (Tübingen, 1973); Christian Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler: The Forging of the Fascist Alliance* (New Haven, 2018).

[6] See e.g. Devin O. Pendas, Mark Roseman, and Richard F. Wetzell (eds.), *Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, 2017); Martina Kessel, *Gewalt und Gelächter: 'Deutschsein' 1914–1945* (Stuttgart, 2019); Michael Wildt, *Die Ambivalenz des Volkes: Der Nationalsozialismus als Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin, 2019).

historical comparisons.[7] However, most studies have been confined to individual nation states, focusing primarily on Germany.[8] Others have used very large comparative datasets on elections, strikes, or street protests to measure the effects of economic shocks on political polarization. In particular, right-wing populist movements and parties gain support after economic crises.[9] While the correlation between economic distress and political extremism is statistically significant over the course of the twentieth century, the explanatory value of these studies is often limited. What we learn from them is that economic crises do lead to political extremism, but it remains unclear why and how this happens, especially in the case of financial crises.

This article argues that European right-wing populist movements drew heavily on economic conflicts and financial shocks and successfully addressed rising distributional cleavages and creditor–debitor conflicts on both a national and international level.[10] Moreover, populist governments had a lasting effect in that they shaped the financial reforms implemented in most countries from the 1930s. This means that economic populism is not only a short-term reaction to economic and financial crisis, but often engenders a long-term transformation of political institutions.

Historians have rarely referred to the concept of populism when analysing the rise of fascism, even though Pierre Rosanvallon has characterized the twentieth century as a 'century of populism'.[11] And yet this concept provides considerable analytical value, especially for the inter-war period. While the comparative study of fascism often

[7] See e.g. Johannes Bähr and Bernd Rudolph, *Finanzkrisen: 1931 und 2008* (Munich, 2011); Barry Eichengreen, *Hall of Mirrors: The Great Depression, The Great Recession, and the Uses – and Misuses – of History* (New York, 2015).

[8] Tobias Straumann, *1931: Debt, Crisis, and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford, 2019).

[9] See e.g. Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch, 'Going to Extremes: Politics after Financial Crises, 1870–2014', *European Economic Review*, 88 (2016), 227–60.

[10] For a general assessment, see Jeffry Frieden, 'The Political Economy of Adjustment and Rebalancing', *Journal of International Money and Finance*, 52 (2015), 4–14.

[11] Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le siècle du populisme: Histoire, théorie, critique* (Paris, 2020); see also Barry Eichengreen, *The Populist Temptation: Economic Grievance and Political Reaction in the Modern Era* (Oxford, 2018).

operates within a narrow framework of defining a 'fascist minimum',[12] populism is a more open concept. Rogers Brubaker has argued that the term 'populism' not only describes an empirical phenomenon, but is also a useful analytical category.[13] It provides a powerful concept with which to explore the erosion of democracy and the emergence of authoritarian—but not necessarily fascist—rule after 1918. It also helps us to better understand why some countries resisted fascist dictatorship, while others did not.

The following analysis focuses on four societies with different political trajectories: Italy, Germany, France, and Britain. The analytical framework is both comparative and transnational. Even though populism appealed to national autonomy, it had a strong cross-border dynamic. Populism was a highly contagious phenomenon.

There is no general consensus about the exact meaning of economic populism. Instead of a single definition, I shall highlight four distinctive features that characterized economic populism in inter-war Europe. The first element refers to Cas Mudde's influential theory that populists claim to speak (and act) on behalf of 'the people', who are set against mostly liberal elites and mainstream politicians.[14] According to this narrative, the 'people' are hardworking and suffer from economic distress, while the elites are self-serving and corrupt. This dichotomy between 'the people' and 'the elites' as two homogenous groups can be interpreted as a simplistic yet effective way to frame rising inequality and distributional conflicts within societies. This vertical antagonism is often accompanied by a horizontal opposition between 'the people at home' and external forces. As I will argue, economic populism takes the most radical forms when agitation combines both dimensions—the vertical and the horizontal.

The second element is protectionism. Nationalist campaigns directed against foreign trade, immigration, or capital mobility were not only frequently combined with nativist ideologies, but also extended

[12] Roger Eatwell, 'On Defining the "Fascist Minimum": The Centrality of Ideology', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1/3 (1996), 303–19.
[13] Rogers Brubaker, 'Why Populism?', *Theory and Society*, 46/5 (2017), 357–85.
[14] Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge, 2007).

to protectionist notions of social welfare.[15] National Socialism in Germany is a case in point. As one of the most radical variants of economic populism, it blended social protection of the 'people's community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*) with visions of economic autarky.[16]

The third distinctive feature is a rhetoric of crisis and national decline. Populists dramatize existing economic problems and frame them in larger narratives of national decline and social degeneration.[17] Redemption is possible, the argument goes, but it requires revolutionary changes and extraordinary measures. Complex causalities, as in the case of financial crises, are frequently explained with reference to conspiracy theories or by blaming ethnic or religious minorities. Economic narratives are a crucial element of populist propaganda, and their success often depends on new forms of media communication.

The fourth element of economic populism is the authoritarian use of technocracy.[18] In opposition, populists typically accuse democratic institutions like parliaments and elected governments of being too weak to solve serious economic problems effectively. But once in power, they combine charismatic dictatorship with technocratic government. This includes the systematic strengthening of existing institutions, such as central banks or ministries, in combination with comprehensive economic planning and regulation.

This classification is, of course, an ideal type, and not all populist movements exhibit all four elements in the same way. However, the classification is useful to understand the common ideological patterns and economic practices of populist movements and regimes during

[15] Dani Rodrik, 'Populism and the Economics of Globalization', *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1/1–2 (2018), 12–33; Philip Manow, 'Welche Rolle spielen Wohlfahrtsstaatlichkeit und Globalisierung für die Ausprägungen des Populismus?', *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, 17/1 (2020), 35–44.

[16] For the concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, see Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt (eds.), *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009); Michael Wildt, *Die Ambivalenz des Volkes: Der Nationalsozialismus als Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin, 2019).

[17] Mark Elchardus, 'Declinism and Populism', *Clingendael Spectator*, 71/3 (2017), 1–10.

[18] Christopher Bickerton and Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, 'Populism and Technocracy: Opposites or Complements?', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 20/2 (2017), 186–206.

the inter-war years. The following article is divided into three parts. It starts with a short analysis of the financial conflicts in Europe after the First World War and their radicalizing effects. The second part discusses the question of financial sovereignty and how the fascist economic system in Italy served as a model for populist movements across Europe. The third part explores the impact of populist regimes on financial and monetary reforms during the 1930s and 1940s.

Finance, Debt, and Distributional Conflicts after the First World War

The post-war economic crisis had not been predicted by contemporary economic experts. It came as a huge shock and increased existing social tensions and political conflicts. All four countries under discussion faced massive public debt, along with high inflation, foreign account deficits, and the constant erosion of their currencies.[19] The situation was worst in Germany, where the question of foreign debts was aggravated by the high burden of reparations. In his book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), John Maynard Keynes had predicted the radicalizing effect of the Treaty of Versailles.[20] The financial burden of the reparations was aggravated by the fact that no lasting settlement was reached between Germany and the Allies.[21] For right-wing populist movements in Germany, this turned out to be a gift, as they could blame foreign powers for the harsh terms imposed on them. For German governments, the so-called 'Versailles diktat' was a frequently used tool for diverting attention from their own political failures.

Yet for the victors of the war too, the Treaty of Versailles was a political burden, as the financial compensation was considered inadequate and gave rise to internal political conflict and social unrest. Strikes and revolutionary ferment broke out almost everywhere. In a certain sense,

[19] See Charles H. Feinstein, Peter Temin, and Gianni Toniolo, *The European Economy between the Wars* (Oxford, 1997), 18–53.

[20] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (London, 1919).

[21] Sally Marks, 'Mistakes and Myths: The Allies, Germany, and the Versailles Treaty, 1918–1921', *Journal of Modern History*, 85/3 (2013), 632–59.

the post-war European crisis can be interpreted as a distributional conflict that assumed both national and international dimensions.[22] At its heart, this was a struggle over the question of who should pay for the war, and any solution would inevitably have consequences for how the costs were shared among the population. For governments, inflation was a popular instrument for reducing debt, but it had significant redistributional effects. At the national level, the fierce international conflicts over reparations were bound up with accusations that certain social groups had profited from the war while ordinary people had been fighting in the trenches. Condemnation of wartime profiteers affected all countries, though it was particularly severe in Germany and led to a new wave of antisemitic campaigns.[23]

In all four countries, the post-war economic and social crisis led to a perception of decline, while exposure to external forces seemed to reduce the political autonomy of national governments. Shrinking competitiveness, declining exports, and negative balances of payments created a sense of crisis and external dependency. This was a particularly bitter experience for Britain and France, where falling exports were accompanied by a relative decline of their financial centres.[24] The French banking sector had already been fading in importance for some time, but this trend was now becoming more apparent. In Britain, the decline was critical as London's position as a global financial hub had largely depended on trade finance, which collapsed with the outbreak of the war. Anti-colonial movements were also challenging Britain's position in the international system. Although financial activities in the City of London gradually recovered during the 1920s, they never returned to previous levels. Many international banks closed their London branches during the war and did not return afterwards.

[22] Charles S. Maier, 'Die deutsche Inflation als Verteilungskonflikt: Soziale Ursachen und Auswirkungen im internationalen Vergleich', in Otto Busch and Gerald Feldman (eds.), *Historische Prozesse der deutschen Inflation 1914 bis 1924* (Berlin, 1978), 329–42.

[23] Martin H. Geyer, 'Contested Narratives of the Weimar Republic: The Case of the "Kutisker–Barmat Scandal"', in Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (eds.), *Weimar Publics – Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Weimar Republic* (New York, 2010), 211–35.

[24] See Youssef Cassis and Eric Bussière (eds.), *London and Paris as International Financial Centres in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2005).

In Italy, the post-war crisis was even worse. In 1918 Italy had one of the highest inflation rates in Europe, a soaring public debt, and stagnating wages, which led to major social unrest.[25] In 1921 a severe crisis unfolded in the Italian banking sector when the Banca Italiana di Sconto—one of the country's most important industrial banks—became insolvent, triggering a major default of the Italian financial system. The bankruptcy had huge political effects as the Banca Italiana di Sconto had been heavily involved in war finance and had close ties to high political circles, as well as to the armaments company Ansaldo.[26] The bank was accused of lining its pockets during the war while hundreds of thousands of Italians starved to death or were hunkered down in trenches for the fatherland. Moreover, the bank's insolvency now threatened to wipe out the savings of millions of Italians. Managers and political leaders were accused of share price manipulation and delayed filing of bankruptcy. The episode played into the hands of Mussolini, as the Italian public grew convinced that the old liberal elite surrounding Prime Minister Francesco Nitti had failed politically and was mired in corruption.

Financial conflicts also shaped international diplomacy after the First World War. Here once again, the question of how to re-establish the international order was highly controversial. On the one hand, it was apparent that the informal system of co-operation that had dominated international finance before 1914 could not be restored. On the other, the new institutions around the League of Nations were too weak to create a new and powerful system of global financial governance. While scholars such as Patricia Clavin have revisited the role of the League of Nations, from the contemporary perspective at least the League's limitations cannot be ignored.[27] Hardly any of the recommendations made by the League's Economic and Financial Organization (founded in 1920) had the desired effects. One example

25 Sabrina Leo, 'Il sistema finanziario della prima guerra mondiale tra debiti di guerra e riparazioni', *Eunomia: Rivista semestrale di Storia e Politica Internazionali*, 4/2 (2015), 77–100.

26 Anna Maria Falchero, *La Banca italiana di sconto, 1914–1921: Sette anni di guerra* (Milan, 1990).

27 Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946* (Oxford, 2013).

was a commission established in 1920 under the leadership of the Dutch banker ter Meulen, which sought to introduce an international credit scheme as a new basis for trade finance. In the UK in particular there were high expectations for the scheme, which led to all the more disappointment when it failed.[28]

One of the paradoxical effects of this initiative was that international collaboration increased on the level of informal networks. Private actors, and especially bankers, played a key part in this. Bank directors had already expanded the scope of their public engagement during the war, when they acted as financial experts and managers of the wartime economy in many countries. A few, such as Karl Helfferich, a director of Deutsche Bank, were even appointed to political office. After 1918, bankers represented their governments in the important Financial Commission of the Versailles Treaty negotiations, such as Carl Melchior on the German side; Melchior also became the German government's key adviser in subsequent reparation negotiations.[29] In 1926 he was appointed as the German representative to the League of Nations Financial Committee, and from 1931 he served as a board member of the Bank for International Settlements in Basel. Another example was Carl Bergmann, a former director of Deutsche Bank, who became the German representative to the Versailles Reparations Commission and head of the War Burdens Commission.[30] International financial experts gained considerable importance in the reparation settlements. For instance, the Dawes Committee included many high-profile figures of finance, such as Émile Francqui, a prominent Belgian banker; Josiah Stamp, a director at the Bank of England; and Jean Parmentier, the French inspector general of finance.[31] Their expertise allowed them to become important

[28] Jamieson G. Myles, 'Steering the Wheels of Commerce: State and Enterprise in International Trade Finance, 1914–1929' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Geneva, 2021), 101–41.

[29] Melchior continued to have close relations with Keynes. See John Maynard Keynes, *Two Memoirs: Dr. Melchior, A Defeated Enemy, and My Early Beliefs* (London, 1949).

[30] Werner Plumpe, Alexander Nützenadel, and Catherine Schenk, *Deutsche Bank: The Global Hausbank 1870–2020* (London, 2020), 262–3.

[31] Robert Yee, 'Reparations Revisited: The Role of Economic Advisers in Reforming German Central Banking and Public Finance', *Financial History Review*, 27/1 (2020), 45–72.

advisers of national governments, but even more important were their international networks, which allowed communication when official diplomatic channels were blocked. For a politically isolated country like Germany, these international contacts were an indispensable asset. Yet these activities also fuelled popular distrust of the international financial establishment, which was portrayed as a small wealthy elite pursuing its own agenda instead of common national interests.

To many observers, it seemed as if financial actors were growing more and more powerful. Not only did bankers play an important public role, but banks too seemed to gain more market power as a consequence of concentration through various mergers and acquisitions during and after the war.[32] Many commercial banks were transformed into vast financial conglomerates. Concentration was a response to shrinking profitability, a problem that had become particularly acute during the era of inflation. Nevertheless, the overall impression was that banks were gaining increasing influence in all spheres of the economy. This was exacerbated by the fact that large commercial banks, especially in Germany and Italy, but also in France, were acquiring substantial industrial holdings.

At the same time, the international exposure of banks increased due to high balance of payment deficits and a rise in international lending in the private sector. The bulk of international credit was short-term, which made financial markets more volatile.[33] While this stimulated the economic recovery of the Golden Twenties, it also increased exposure to international financial investors. On the eve of the Great Depression, 40 per cent of the funds held by German banks were foreign, most of them short-term loans. Moreover, before the re-establishment of the gold standard in the mid 1920s, arbitrage and speculation on currency markets were highly attractive.[34]

[32] Manfred Pohl, *Konzentration im deutschen Bankwesen (1948–1980)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), 285–357; Eugene Nelson White, 'The Merger Movement in Banking, 1919–1933', *Journal of Economic History*, 45/2 (1985), 285–91.

[33] Olivier Accominotti and Barry Eichengreen, 'The Mother of All Sudden Stops: Capital Flows and Reversals in Europe, 1919–1932', *Economic History Review*, 69/2 (2016), 469–92.

[34] Charles H. Feinstein and Katherine Watson, 'Private International Capital Flows in Europe in the Inter-War Period', in Charles H. Feinstein (ed.), *Banking, Currency, and Finance in Europe between the Wars* (Oxford, 1995), 94–130.

To conclude, the inter-war period did not mark the end of financial globalization. On the contrary, it saw an increase in global capital mobility and financial intermediation through banks and other financial actors.

In Quest of Financial Sovereignty: The Fascist Model

As global finance soared, demands for monetary and financial sovereignty gained in importance. In all European countries, the return to gold currency was seen as an essential step in this direction. Before 1914, the gold standard had been an instrument to facilitate international trade and finance, but now it became a project of national autonomy and financial independence.[35]

These populist demands were loudest in fascist Italy. In the summer of 1925 Mussolini launched the 'Battle for Grain' as a large populist campaign to make Italy independent of foreign imports.[36] The goal was to stimulate domestic wheat production by introducing high tariff walls, thus removing the country's dependency on imports. The autarky campaign was not designed solely to prepare for a possible future war, but also to reduce Italy's negative balance of payments. Ironically, the return to the gold standard required huge injections of external capital primarily from loans provided by US banks, combined with a programme of deflation through wage cuts and price controls.[37] Mussolini announced his new programme in a belligerent speech on 18 August 1926:

[35] Barry Eichengreen, *Golden Fetters: The Gold Standard and the Great Depression, 1919–1939* (Oxford, 1992).

[36] Alexander Nützenadel, 'Dictating Food: Autarchy, Food Provision, and Consumer Politics in Fascist Italy, 1922–1943', in Flemming Just and Frank Trentmann (eds.), *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars* (Basingstoke, 2006), 88–108.

[37] Roland Sarti, 'Mussolini and the Italian Industrial Leadership in the Battle of the Lira 1925–1927', *Past & Present*, 47 (1970), 97–112; Michael Behnen, 'Dollars für Mussolini: Amerikanischer Corporate Liberalism und Faschismus 1922–1933', in Jörg Nagler (ed.), *Nationale und internationale Perspektiven amerikanischer Geschichte: Festschrift für Peter Schäfer zum 70. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), 135–55.

> I will never inflict on this wonderful people of Italy, who have worked like heroes and suffered like saints for four years, the moral shame and economic catastrophe of the failure of the lira. The fascist regime will resist with all its power the attempts by hostile financial powers to bleed it dry, and is determined to crush them when they are detected within. The fascist regime is prepared . . . to make all the necessary sacrifices. But our lira, which represents the symbol of the nation, the sign of our wealth, the fruit of our work, our efforts, our sacrifices, our tears, our blood, must be defended and will be defended. When I go out among the people, the people who really work, I feel that by speaking like this I perfectly interpret their feelings, their aspirations, and their will.[38]

The return to the gold standard was coupled with extensive regulation of the private banking sector. As early as 1925, the fascist government passed a law placing the stock market under its control. The Banca d'Italia was nationalized in 1926 and granted a monopoly on issuing banknotes. In the same year, the private commercial banks were placed under the supervision of the Banca d'Italia and a minimum reserve requirement was imposed. The regime also introduced insurance to protect bank deposits. The following years saw further regulations. In 1931 the industrial holdings of the major commercial banks were split off into a state-run holding company. The large commercial banks were nationalized, and a further strengthening of the Banca d'Italia as a note-issuing and supervisory institution followed in 1936.[39]

Italy's return to the gold standard and the financial reforms that its government embarked upon in 1926 met with widespread approval abroad. Mussolini was praised for his vigorous approach not only in right-wing, nationalist circles, but also by many liberals and conservatives. In France, Italy's programme of currency nationalism seemed

[38] Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, ed. Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel, 44 vols. (Florence and Rome, 1951–80), xxii. 197 (translation my own).

[39] Alfredo Gigliobianco, Claire Giordano, and Gianni Toniolo, 'Innovation and Regulation in the Wake of Financial Crises in Italy (1880s–1930s)', in Alfredo Gigliobianco and Gianni Toniolo (eds.), *Financial Market Regulation in the Wake of Financial Crises: The Historical Experience* (Rome, 2009), 45–74.

to strengthen the conservative government under Raymond Poincaré in its own attempts to return to the gold standard. For Poincaré, invoking the threat of currency depreciation and capital flight was a strategy to curb the radical forces in his *union nationale* coalition.[40]

Political conflicts about the return to pre-war gold parity also arose in Britain, which experienced a wave of strikes and street protests after 1925. Conservatives such as Winston Churchill praised Mussolini's authoritarian programme of financial and monetary stabilization. Churchill, who had overseen the return to the gold standard as chancellor of the Exchequer, visited Mussolini in early 1927. On this occasion, he celebrated the Duce for his 'struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism' and applauded his efforts 'to maintain a strict and safer standard of Italian finance'.[41]

Churchill's admiration for Mussolini is well known.[42] But Churchill was not alone; in fact, he represented a growing group of admirers of Mussolini among conservative and right-wing politicians in Britain.[43] One example was Lord Rothermere, the founder of the *Daily Mail* and owner of a huge newspaper empire with millions of readers. Rothermere was a pioneer of the popular press in Britain, and he used his media outlets for crude populist campaigns which centred on economic conflicts and national rivalries. Rothermere blamed British politicians for ignoring the deep economic crisis and the relative decline of British industries compared to the rest of the world. 'How are we faring in the Economic War which is now upon us?' he asked in an article published in February 1928.[44] The answer seemed to be simple: 'Inevitably one turns towards the example of Italy, which has emerged

[40] Kenneth Mouré, *The Gold Standard Illusion: France, the Bank of France, and the International Gold Standard, 1914–1939* (Oxford, 2002), 114.

[41] 'Mr. Churchill on Fascism', *The Times*, 21 Jan. 1927.

[42] See Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *Churchill's Shadow: The Life and Afterlife of Winston Churchill* (New York, 2021).

[43] See Martin Pugh, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!' Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (London, 2006), 5; Bernhard Dietz, *Neo-Tories: The Revolt of British Conservatives against Democracy and Political Modernity (1929–1939)*, trans. Ian Copestake (London, 2018); Anna Lena Kocks, *Geselligkeit vereinnahmen: Jugend und Freizeit als Agitationsfelder des italienischen und britischen Faschismus* (Darmstadt, 2021), 127–30.

[44] Lord Rothermere, 'Do We Need a Mussolini?', *Sunday Pictorial*, 28 Feb. 1926, 8.

from a position of impending ruin and is to-day economically the most progressive nation in Europe—thanks to the genius of one man.' However, Rothermere was sceptical about importing fascism to Britain. Besides the fact that 'no man with the necessary qualities has yet appeared on the political horizon . . . autocratic control vested in one person has always been repugnant to the British people'. As an alternative, Rothermere proposed the institution of a 'Committee of Three' invested with 'plenary powers'. The remit of this triumvirate was to be restricted to economic policy, and their members should have no 'political entanglements'.[45] For this office, Rothermere recommended established figures from the corporate world, such as the chairman of Imperial Airways Eric Geddes, or Reginald McKenna from Midland Bank.

Rothermere's proposal was unsuccessful, but it is evidence of a new populist tone that entered the British debate on economic policy. In 1929 Rothermere once again used his media empire to support the Empire Free Trade Crusade founded by Lord Beaverbrook, another newspaper magnate. The initiative aimed to create a trade zone for the British Empire that was to be protected from the rest of the world by a high tariff wall—an idea analogous to the preferential trade zones established by Italy and Germany after the Great Depression.[46]

Such positive responses to authoritarian models of economic organization were not limited to right-wing political figures. Corporatist ideas, for example, attracted considerable attention even in the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, as the British left sought inspiration for new concepts of economic planning and industrial modernization.[47] Flirting with Italian fascism did not necessarily mean a wholesale import of the system to Britain. Many moderate Tories, such as the young Harold Macmillan, rejected Mussolini and

[45] Ibid. [46] Jerry M. Calton, 'Beaverbrook's Split Imperial Personality: Canada, Britain, and the Empire Free Trade Movement of 1929–1931', *The Historian*, 37/1 (1974), 26–45, at 37; on Lord Rothermere's support for the British Union of Fascists, see Pugh, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!'*, 140, 149–50.
[47] L. P. Carpenter, 'Corporatism in Britain 1930–45', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11/1 (1976), 3–25; Valerio Torreggiani, 'Towards an Orderly Society: Capitalist Planning and Corporatist Ideology in Britain in the Great Slump (1931–1934)', *Journal of European Economic History*, 1 (2016), 67–97.

his brutal regime while being intrigued by fascist corporatism and economic planning. Macmillan worked and published constantly on corporatist themes, starting with his book on *Industry and the State* (1927).[48] Other prominent admirers included Basil Blackett, a director of the Bank of England; Arthur Salter, the former head of the Economic and Financial Organization of the League of Nations; and Lord Melchett, the chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries, who proposed a National Industrial Council inspired by fascist economic organizations. All these figures were sceptical that traditional institutions would be able to solve the mounting economic problems and social conflicts. Parliaments were seen as lacking the necessary economic expertise and the will to take decisive action.

A similar interest in fascist Italy existed in almost every European country after the onset of the Great Depression.[49] As in the UK, these discussions were not limited to the various fascist or radical right-wing movements. Moreover, fascists outside Italy often sought to set themselves apart and emphasized their ideological originality and political independence. Oswald Mosley, the founder of the British Union of Fascists, argued for corporatist ideas and increased state control over the economy in his 1932 manifesto *The Greater Britain*. But instead of deferring to Mussolini, he claimed these economic ideas as his own: 'We seek to organise the Modern Movement in this country by British methods in a form which is suitable to and characteristic of Great Britain. We are essentially a national movement, and if our policy could be summarised in two words, they would be "Britain First"'.[50] Similarly, in inter-war Germany, the rising Nazi movement displayed an ambivalent attitude towards Italian fascism by insisting on the originality of its own economic programme. Even though

[48] Valerio Torreggiani, 'The Making of Harold Macmillan's Third Way in Interwar Britain (1924–1935)', in Alessandro Salvador and Anders Kjøstvedt (eds.), *New Political Ideas in the Aftermath of the Great War* (Cham, 2017), 67–85.
[49] António Costa Pinto, 'Fascism, Corporatism and the Crafting of Authoritarian Institutions in Inter-War European Dictatorships', in id. and Aristotle Kallis (eds.), *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (Basingstoke, 2014), 87–117.
[50] Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain* (London, 1932), 19; see also Gary Love, '"What's the Big Idea?" Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42/3 (2007), 447–68.

many Nazis considered the Duce to be a natural ally, ideological and political rivalries remained considerable even after 1933.[51]

However, in Germany too, interest in Italian fascism increased noticeably during the Great Depression. One of the most active advocates of the Italian dictatorship was Erwin von Beckerath, an eminent professor of economics at the University of Cologne. Beckerath wrote several books on Italian fascism, organized lectures and conferences with German and Italian scholars, and finally founded a department of corporatist studies at the Petrarca Institute in Cologne in November 1933. Beckerath's sympathy for Mussolini was driven by the expectation that National Socialism would eventually drop its revolutionary economic programme and follow the more moderate path of Italian fascism.[52]

In German banking, interest in Italy was strongly motivated by concerns about the consequences for private ownership of a possible Hitler government. A cause for concern were radical Nazi party representatives such as Gottfried Feder, who demanded the end of 'interest slavery' to the large commercial banks. Feder claimed that the nationalization of the banks in the summer of 1931 should not be limited to a period of crisis, but made permanent.[53] For Feder and other Nazi ideologists, the savings and co-operative banks represented the genuine and healthy German tradition of banking, while the large commercial banks stood for 'internationalist' and Jewish influences on finance. In the wake of the banking crisis, antisemitic campaigns targeted large commercial banks, blaming the crash on the over-representation of Jewish managers and their allegedly

51 See Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler*.

52 Wolfgang Schieder, 'Das italienische Experiment: Der Faschismus als Vorbild in der Krise der Weimarer Republik', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 262/1 (1996), 73–125; id., 'Faschismus für Deutschland: Erwin von Beckerath und das Italien Mussolinis', in Christian Jansen, Lutz Niethammer, and Bernd Weisbrod (eds.), *Von der Aufgabe der Freiheit: Politische Verantwortung und bürgerliche Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Hans Mommsen zum 5. November 1995* (Berlin, 1995), 267–83.

53 Addresses by Wilhelm Keppler and Gottfried Feder at the meeting of the Investigation Committee on 6 September 1933 in Deutsches Reich: Untersuchungsauschuss für das Bankwesen 1933, *Untersuchung des Bankwesens 1933*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1933–4), vol. i. pt. i. 12–19.

cosmopolitan ideas. Economic antisemitism had a long tradition in Germany, but after the failure of the Danat under the leadership of Jakob Goldschmidt in 1931, Nazi propaganda was successful in linking antisemitism to financial speculation and mismanagement.[54] This propaganda seemed all the more plausible as Goldschmidt stood accused not only of risky investments and lax credit practices, but also of accounting fraud. Similarly, the largest German bank, the Deutsche Bank und Disconto-Gesellschaft, came under public attack after a series of financial scandals and misinvestments. Further outrage was caused by Deutsche Bank's refusal to participate in a banking consortium to rescue the Danat.[55] The fact that the German taxpayer had to foot an enormous bill for bank bailouts while the government cut the wages of civil servants and benefits for jobless workers increased the general feeling that the burden of the crisis was being distributed unequally. This sentiment was fuelled by the Nazi propaganda machine. The huge electoral success of the NSDAP in July 1932 was, as we know from various analyses of national and regional elections, strongly influenced by the banking crisis and its polarizing political and socio-economic effects.[56]

Financial Regulation in Times of Populism

What impact did populism have on monetary and banking reforms during the 1930s and 1940s? In Germany, although most members of the economic elite underestimated Hitler's radicalism and violence, their prediction that the new regime would sooner or later adopt a more moderate stance in economic policy proved to be right. Hitler called the former president of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht, back into office. Schacht—who in 1934 also became Reich minister

[54] See Martin H. Geyer, 'What Crisis? Speculation, Corruption, and the State of Emergency during the Great Depression', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington DC*, 55 (2014), 9–35.
[55] Plumpe, Nützenadel, and Schenk, *Deutsche Bank*, 293–5.
[56] Sebastian Doerr, Stefan Gissler, José-Luis Peydró, et al., 'Financial Crises and Political Radicalization: How Failing Banks Paved Hitler's Path to Power', *BIS Working Papers*, 978 (2021).

of economics—was well-known for opposing the nationalization of commercial banks. Schacht set the tone for the inquiry commission established in summer 1933 to discuss the causes of the banking crisis and the reorganization of the German financial system.[57]

In its final report, the commission partly echoed the nationalist and racist perspectives of the Nazi programme in arguing that German banks were sound, and that their main problems were caused by external forces, including the high reparation costs and the withdrawal of foreign credits. Furthermore, the report endorsed the existing banking system, with its mixture of private commercial houses and public and savings banks. While Jewish bank directors were dismissed and Jewish owners expropriated under Aryanization laws, all banks that had been placed under state ownership after 1931 were reprivatized by 1936.[58] Clearly, Schacht and other Nazi leaders shared a belief in the continued existence of a private banking system as an important tool for financing rearmament and organizing the monetary side of warfare.[59] At the same time, the Bank Act of 1934 and the Stock Corporation Act of 1937 created a comprehensive legal framework with which to control the entire financial and corporate sector.[60]

Remarkably, there were substantial similarities to the banking reform initiated by the fascist government in Italy in 1926. Liquidity rules and reserve requirements were introduced to enforce the stability of the financial sector. Establishing new banks or subsidiaries required government approval, and competition within the banking sector was suppressed by the introduction of fixed interest rates and provisions. State control was generally intensified, and was exercised by the Reichsbank, the banking commissioner, and a new

[57] Christopher Kopper, *Zwischen Marktwirtschaft und Dirigismus: Bankenpolitik im 'Dritten Reich' 1933–1939* (Bonn, 1995), 86–112.

[58] Dieter Ziegler, 'After the Crisis: Nationalisation and Re-Privatization of the German Great Banks 1931–1937', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 52/2 (2011), 55–73.

[59] On Schacht, see Christopher Kopper, *Hjalmar Schacht: Aufstieg und Fall von Hitlers mächtigstem Bankier* (Munich, 2006).

[60] Johannes Bähr, 'Modernes Bankrecht und dirigistische Kapitallenkung: Zur Steuerung der Ebenen im Finanzsektor des "Dritten Reichs"', in Dieter Gosewinkel (ed.), *Wirtschaftskontrolle und Recht in der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 199–223.

control board.[61] All in all, legal regulation of finance in Nazi Germany was based on rigorous state control, but universal banking was not touched—unlike in Italy, where a separation had been introduced between banking and industry, and between short- and long-term credit. Convergence of regulation did not necessarily mean that both countries followed exactly the same path.

Although France and Britain also faced severe economic problems after 1929, the shock waves of the Wall Street crash were less severe than in Germany and Italy. In Britain, where gold parity was abandoned in September 1931, output fell by 6 per cent between 1929 and 1932, while Germany saw a fall of more than 30 per cent during the same period. Britain also experienced almost no bank failures in the inter-war period. Liquidity-to-capital ratios remained stable, and credit banks did not engage in risky credit practices, as they did in Germany.[62] Indeed, most British politicians agreed that the country's economic problems were rooted mainly in the industrial sector and in declining exports rather than in finance. The Macmillan Committee on Finance and Industry, formed in 1929 to inquire into the causes of the depression, criticized the banks not for their general business practices, but only for their lack of engagement in financing industry, while Keynes in particular questioned the Bank of England's reluctance to enforce macroeconomic stabilization. As a consequence of the Macmillan report, a special institution was created to finance medium and small businesses, but inter-war Britain remained almost entirely free of formal banking regulation. It was not until 1946 that the Bank of England was nationalized and moderate supervision of commercial banks was introduced.[63]

The French banking system, unlike Britain's, was geared towards the Italian model. Like Italy, France maintained the gold standard

[61] Theo Balderston, 'German Banking between the Wars: The Crisis of the Credit Banks', *Business History Review*, 65/3 (1991), 554–605, at 588.

[62] H. W. Richardson, 'The Economic Significance of the Depression in Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4/4 (1969), 3–19; Patrick K. O'Brien, 'Britain's Economy between the Wars: A Survey of a Counter-Revolution in Economic History', *Past & Present*, 115 (1987), 107–30; Steven N. Broadberry, *The British Economy between the Wars: A Macroeconomic Survey* (Oxford, 1986).

[63] Christos Hadjiemmanuil, 'Banking Regulation and the Bank of England: Discretion and Remedies' (Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 1996), 24–5.

until 1936, and the Banque de France pursued a strict course of monetary stability. However, the private banks were less affected by the crisis than those in Germany or Italy. Only small, regional banks went bankrupt, and there were no massive bank panics or withdrawals of foreign credit. More important was a flight to safety from commercial to domestic savings banks.[64] As the Banque de France had accumulated huge gold reserves, no foreign currency crisis occurred like that in Germany. The economic downturn was less severe, even though it lasted longer. The Banque de France and the conservative government were criticized for their monetary orthodoxy and their reluctance to fight the crisis. Populist campaigns were waged both by radical right-wing groups, such as the Croix-de-Feu, and by the radical left, leading to street protests and violent conflicts—especially in the wake of the political scandal around the Jewish financier Alexandre Stavisky, which led to rumours of a right-wing *coup d'* é*tat*.[65] Populist criticism was directed not only at Stavisky and other bankers, but also at the Banque de France, which was still under private ownership, and the ensuing campaigns popularized tropes like that of the *200 familles*—a small elite which allegedly controlled both the private economy and the monetary system, and which strictly opposed devaluation for selfish motives. Economic antisemitism had a long-standing tradition in France, but the enduring economic crisis and internal political polarization triggered a new wave of antisemitic propaganda from the right-wing press, especially after the electoral victory of the left-wing Popular Front in May 1936. In the following years, continuous antisemitic campaigns attacked the new prime minister Léon Blum, a Jewish socialist, along with other politicians and public figures from finance and banking.[66]

[64] Patrice Baubeau, Eric Monet, Angelo Riva, et al., 'Flight-to-Safety and the Credit Crunch: A New History of the Banking Crises in France during the Great Depression', *Economic History Review*, 74/1 (2021), 223–50; see also Jacques Marseille, 'Les origines "inopportunes" de la crise de 1929 en France', *Revue économique*, 31/4 (1980), 648–84; Michel Lescure, 'Banking in France in the Inter-War Period', in Feinstein (ed.), *Banking*, 315–36.

[65] See Paul Jankowski, *Stavisky: A Confidence Man in the Republic of Virtue* (Ithaca, NY, 2002).

[66] Julian Jackson, *The Politics of Depression in France 1932–1936* (Cambridge, 2002), esp. 99, 126, and 182; Jean-Marc Dreyfus, 'Banquiers et financiers juifs

The transformation of the French monetary and banking system started in 1936 under Blum's Popular Front regime. The country finally left the gold standard and devalued the franc, while an act passed on 24 July 1936 gave the government the power to intervene directly in the management of the Banque de France. Proposals for further regulation of commercial banks were controversially discussed in the new National Economic Council. While one group preferred to nationalize the banking system, others favoured a corporatist system based on a certain degree of autonomy for the banks. The Bank Act was postponed several times and finally imposed under pressure from the German occupation authorities in June 1941.[67] The German military administration appointed a commissioner to control the Banque de France and the private banks, but left the implementation of monetary and financial policy to the French institutions. The willingness of the Vichy regime to collaborate with the Nazis and to transfer enormous financial resources to the war machine of the Reich was the price for maintaining a certain level of autonomy.[68] As a result, the Germans did not change the legal and institutional framework created in France after 1936. The post-war government under Charles de Gaulle preserved most of the wartime regulations and continued the reforms by nationalizing the Banque de France together with the major commercial banks. The transformation of the French monetary and financial system between 1936 and 1945 was an important prerequisite for the *planification économique* (economic planning) established during the post-war era.[69]

de 1929 à 1962: Transitions et ruptures', *Archives Juives*, 29/2 (1996), 83–99; Ralph Schor, *L'antisémitisme en France pendant les années trente: Prélude à Vichy* (Brussels, 1992).

[67] Claire Andrieu, 'Genèse de la loi du 13 juin 1941, première loi bancaire française (septembre 1940–septembre 1941)', *Revue Historique*, 269/2 (1983), 385–97.

[68] See Filippo Occhino, Kim Oosterlinck, and Eugene N. White, 'How Occupied France Financed its own Exploitation in World War II', *American Economic Review*, 97/2, (2007), 295–9.

[69] See Eric Monnet, *Controlling Credit: Central Banking and the Planned Economy in Postwar France, 1948–1973* (Cambridge, 2018).

Conclusion

To conclude, I will highlight four major findings of this research, which will also enable comparative perspectives on the present.

First, domestic and international conflicts over financial and monetary policy increased dramatically during the inter-war era and gave birth to extreme populist movements and parties. Populists successfully addressed economic misery, social disparities, and monetary instability. They framed economic crises in overarching narratives of national decline, global dependence, and a loss of economic sovereignty. In this context, the crash of 1931 was the 'perfect storm' (to borrow a metaphor used by Rogers Brubaker with reference to the financial crisis of 2008).[70] Still, history teaches us that there is no linear causality between financial shocks and the rise of populist movements. Populism is more than just a stylistic repertoire that can be activated whenever the moment seems right. Neither can we explain populism—as proposed by some economists—using a simple model of supply and demand, in which demand is determined by exposure to foreign trade shocks or rising social insecurity, and supply depends on the existence of charismatic leaders and populist ideologies.[71] From the comparative studies of de Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O'Rourke we know that the cumulative effects of persistent or recurrent economic recessions were more significant for right-wing voting patterns than individual economic shocks.[72] This means that past experiences and long-term cultural shifts are key factors in explaining populism. While this finding should motivate more interdisciplinary research at the intersection of economic and cultural history, it has far-reaching implications for the understanding of populism in the present. The bad news may be that populism will not disappear when the economic situation improves, as it is deeply rooted in our culture.

[70] Brubaker, 'Why Populism?', 369.

[71] See e.g. Luigi Guiso, Helio Herrera, Massomo Morelli, et al., 'Demand and Supply of Populism', *EIEF Working Papers Series*, 17/03 (2017), at [http://www.eief.it/files/2017/02/wp-173.pdf], accessed 7 Feb. 2022.

[72] Alan de Bromhead, Barry Eichengreen, and Kevin H. O'Rourke, 'Political Extremism in the 1920s and 1930s: Do German Lessons Generalize?', *Journal of Economic History*, 73/2 (2013), 371–406.

Second, populism is characterized by a complex interplay between the anti-global agendas of populist movements on the one hand, and their international transmission on the other. The example of Italian fascism and its impact on populist financial and monetary agendas in other European countries is a case in point, demonstrating how populist movements are embedded in transnational processes. More important than internal exchanges between the various fascist movements and regimes is the question of how these transnational influences reached beyond extreme right-wing political groups to shape even 'mainstream' political agendas. Again, it is important to examine specific political practices rather than just looking at ideological programmes and exchanges.

Third, populist ideas spread to most European countries from the 1920s, but their political impact varied. Germany and Italy were most strongly affected, while in France, left-wing populism proved more powerful than the right-wing variants.[73] However, during the 1930s, France experienced a convergence of these populist movements and their social and economic demands. As Michel Winock has argued, a 'populist synthesis [*synthèse populiste*]' characterized the country's political evolution in the wake of the depression.[74] Britain is an interesting example of a country where economic populism hardly translated into extreme voting patterns and party structures. As vociferous as Mosley's Union of Fascists was, it remained a tiny group compared to right-wing movements in Germany, Italy, and many other European countries.[75] One standard explanation lies in the fact that Britain left the gold standard relatively early and was able to pursue more expansive fiscal and monetary policies.[76] Perhaps of equal importance was the strategy adopted by the national

[73] Marc Lazar, 'Du populisme à gauche: Les cas français et italien', *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 56 (1997), 121–31.

[74] Michel Winock, 'Populismes français', *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 56 (1997), 77–91, esp. 84–5.

[75] See Mike Cronin (ed.), *The Failure of British Fascism: The Far Right and the Fight for Political Recognition* (Basingstoke, 1996); John Stevenson, 'Conservatism and the Failure of Fascism in Interwar Britain', in Martin Blinkhorn (ed.), *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe* (London, 2012), 270–88.

[76] See e.g. Eichengreen, *Populist Temptation*, 73–88.

governments after 1931 to integrate populist demands into the political mainstream.

Fourth, populism was not only a protest movement or a destructive political force, but also created new instruments of state intervention into the economy. While most political scientists agree that anti-institutionalism is a key feature of present-day populism, this assumption must be questioned from the perspective of the inter-war experience. Once in power, populist regimes pursue a technocratic agenda and create legal and bureaucratic institutions that last for a long time. These transformations are often a compromise between populist claims and more technical requirements, as the financial and monetary reforms of the 1930s and 1940s show.

All four countries provide good examples of technocratic path dependency that reached far beyond the caesura of 1945. For Germany, Albrecht Ritschl has pointed to the 'long shadow' of the Third Reich, arguing that Hjalmar Schacht was more important for the design of the social market economy than Ludwig Erhard.[77] It is certainly true that the Bank Act of 1934 was adopted by the Federal Republic with only marginal changes. In the case of Italy and France, the legacies of the 1930s and 1940s are even more significant, as banking regulations and monetary regimes created in this period remained effective until the 1980s. Even though banking regulation in Britain remained less institutionalized, tendencies towards more supervision and co-ordination through the Bank of England also existed there.

On the international level, one of the most far-reaching consequences of these institutional continuities was the fact that financial regulation generally remained the preserve of the nation state until the 1980s. From a historical perspective, the manifold implications of these continuities remain a puzzle, and this should inspire more comparative research. The historical entanglement of fascism and finance may provide a clue to better understand these long-term trajectories in twentieth-century Europe.

[77] Albrecht Ritschl, 'Der lange Schatten Hjalmar Schachts: Zu den langfristigen Wirkungen des Dritten Reichs auf die Wirtschaftsordnung Deutschlands seit dem Kriege', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 45/2 (2004), 245–8.

ALEXANDER NÜTZENADEL is Professor of Economic and Social History at the Humboldt University of Berlin and the 2021/2022 Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor at the LSE and the German Historical Institute London. His main research interests lie in twentieth-century European economic history. He specializes in financial history, the history of economic expertise, and the political economy of fascism in comparative perspective.