

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-82344-9 - Business and Politics in Europe, 1900-1970: Essays in Honour of Alice Teichova

Edited by Terry Gourvish

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Business and Politics in Europe, 1900–1970

There has been increasing interest in recent years in establishing connections between the political history and the business history of Europe in the twentieth century. This book includes new research on the interactions of politicians, businessmen and their institutions in eight countries, with particular focus on the highly charged inter-war period.

Fourteen essays cover subjects under four main headings: the business–politics paradigm; banking finance; business and politics in the National Socialist period; and the business community and the state. Together they form a fitting tribute to the academic scholarship and inspiration offered by Alice Teichova. In her distinguished career, and in particular since the publication of her path-breaking book *An Economic Background to Munich* in 1974, she has done much to stimulate a collaborative approach to international comparative work in the field of economic, political and business history. The case studies presented here demonstrate her considerable legacy to the subject.

TERRY GOURVISH is Director of the Business History Unit, London School of Economics and Political Science.

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Professor Alice Teichova and Dr Mikuláš Teich

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Preface

I should like to thank all those who so generously helped me to prepare this volume in honour of Alice Teichova, and in particular the many colleagues and friends who contributed to and supported 'AT80', the appreciation symposium organised by the Business History Unit and held at the London School of Economics in September 2000. The support of sponsors was itself a tribute to Alice's international reputation. I should like to thank the Austrian Embassy in London, the British Academy, ING-Barings and the European Association for Banking History for their assistance. A number of people worked behind the scenes to ensure that the event, and its aftermath, the preparation of a volume for publication, were a success. I owe a particular debt to Alice's husband, Mikuláš, who encouraged and supported me at all stages. Sonia Copeland organised the symposium with characteristic warmth and efficiency, and Francis Goodall offered me his considerable skills in copy-editing and proof-reading. Last, but certainly not least, Bill Davies at Cambridge University Press tried to keep the project and its editor on a steady course. Responsibility for the final product, is, of course, mine.

The academic career of Alice Teichova, celebrated in this volume, has been both eclectic and yet systematic. Her historical writings have progressed logically in seamless vein from the dynamics of international capitalism and cartel-building to the impact of multi-national enterprise, the significance of universal banking, and issues of economic integration and nationality. Throughout this process the interaction of 'business' and 'politics' has been an enduring theme. Alice clearly enjoys an undisputed reputation as an international economic historian. For over thirty years she suffered from the tragedies which Nazism and communism brought to Europe but, an inveterate survivor, she emerged relatively unscathed, and with her quiet determination produced a large number of outstanding books. No-one has been more assiduous than she at giving her fellow historians instructive lessons in the value of teamwork in international comparative ventures. This she did by arranging conferences, giving papers and forming a superb network of scholars, young and old alike.

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It is not too much to talk of an ‘Alice mafia’: an organisation which stretches way beyond the confines of this book. She has also written at length about events which she experienced personally, notably the Munich agreement in 1938 and the fall of the Dubček government in August 1968. Central and Eastern Europe have often formed the backcloth for this work, where Alice’s command of languages and the support of her husband, Mikuláš Teich, a distinguished scholar in his own right, have proved invaluable.

I first remember meeting Alice at Cley next the Sea in North Norfolk in 1971. She had just joined the economic history department of the University of East Anglia, where I was a young lecturer. In Norwich Alice achieved much in broadening the horizons of many of her more parochial colleagues. As an embedded scholar of modern British economic history I was introduced by her to the stimulating challenge of comparative work, first in Darmstadt, then in Uppsala, and latterly in Vienna, Prague, Budapest and Crete. Her academic career was interrupted and challenged by the Second World War and its Cold War aftermath, but she emerged from her experiences in Vienna and Prague, not to speak of Exeter and Leeds(!), undaunted. Not only did she prosper in British academic life after 1968, but she offered her more insular colleagues instructive lessons in the value of collaborative research projects bridging Eastern and Western Europe.

Alice has been at the centre of research and writing in the economic history of twentieth-century Europe for over thirty years. I value her encouragement and support as a fellow historian and as a friend. Her intellectual vitality has been truly amazing, putting the rest of us to shame. Alice, we salute you!

TERRY GOURVISH