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052143033X - Themes in Macroeconomic History: The UK Economy, 1919-1939 - Solomos

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The twenty-year period between the two World Wars was, by any standard, a remarkable one. Characterised by mass unemployment, protectionism, diverse exchange rate regimes, the disintegration of world trade, poor growth prospects and high business cycle volatility, the interwar period has proved to be of enduring interest to economists and policy-makers alike.

This textbook provides a survey of the key macroeconomics questions that arise from the experience of the British economy from 1919 to 1939: Why was unemployment so high and persistent in the interwar years when compared with the low unemployment rates of the pre-1913 era? Did the choice of making a fast transition to the pre-1913 gold parity constrain the economy to a low growth equilibrium? Why were interwar business cycles so volatile when compared to the pre-1913 era? Did tariffs stimulate economic recovery in the 1930s?

Throughout the book a comparative approach is adopted, placing the UK experience in the broader context of the world economy. For example, the fast transition in the UK to the pre-1913 gold parity is contrasted with the experiences of the countries that allowed their currencies to depreciate. The effects of devaluation in the UK in the 1930s are also contrasted with those of the gold bloc economies.

The book is aimed primarily at students of economics studying economic history. A major feature of the book is the application of economic theory to concrete historical examples providing students with a valuable device to evaluate the relevance of competing theoretical frameworks.

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Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1996

First published 1996

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Solomou, Solomos.

Themes in macroeconomic history: the UK economy, 1919-1939

Solomos Solomou.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0 521 43033 X (hc). – ISBN 0 521 43621 4 (pbk.)

1. Great Britain – Economic conditions – 1918-1945.
2. Great Britain – Economic policy – 1918-1945. I. Title.

HC256.3.S56 1996

330.941083 – dc20 95-35069

CIP

ISBN 0 521 43033 X hardback

ISBN 0 521 43621 4 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

VN

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To Alexi and Chloë

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this book I have received valuable comments and advice from Steve Broadberry, Roderick Floud, Tim Hatton, Michael Kitson, Patrick McCartan and the anonymous publisher's referees. The book has its origins in lectures I have given at Cambridge University and Stanford University: many thanks to all the students who have listened. Many of the research findings reported in the book have resulted from research projects funded by the ESRC (grants R000231387 and R000231814).

Thanks are due to Patrick McCartan, as economics editor of the Press, and Anne Rix, copyeditor of the Press, for handling the book efficiently. A special thanks to Alexi and Chloë for elongating the gestation of the book and to Wendy for creating the idea for the project.

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## NOTE ON THE TEXT

Throughout the text asterisks refer to entries in the  
Glossary on pages 166 to 178.