

on the development of economy and infrastructure. The author's cultural approach of identifying and analysing fascist elements while resisting the temptation of imposing the label on the entire government will help us in developing a more differentiated understanding of China's first incarnation of one-party-rule.

For readers outside the field of Chinese history, the study provides a state-of-the-art overview of Nationalist China's fascist endeavours and invites for further comparative studies of fascist theory on a global, non-Eurocentric level. Clinton lays out a starting ground through recurring references to Hitler Germany, Fascist Italy, and US Fordism. Her portrayal of Chinese fascism as a rule of experts, with some leading figures coming from an educational background in engineering, may also act as a basis for future comparative research on technocratic governance or in reference to C. P. Snow's "two cultures" dichotomy. The general brevity of both the studied period and the study itself will allow for future researchers to focus on particular actors and publications in detail or to expand in time by exploring Chinese fascism's precursors and legacy.

Ralf Banken / Ben Wubs (eds.): The Rhine. A Transnational Economic History, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2017, 384 S.

Reviewed by
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The volume is a summary of scientific debates that took place at the first period of conferences organized by the transnational 'RHIN(e)' network. Since 2009, this network brought together scholars from different disciplines in order to bring together research on the economic history of the Rhine. The Rhine has been an economic axis, a borderline of empires, and a place for trade since ancient times. It has been and still is important for large parts of Western Europe. It was even so important for its surrounding economies that the first international organization of modern style – the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR) – was set up to regulate inland navigation on the Rhine and to enhance trade alongside the river. Still today, these regions are among the most economically advanced in Europe.

The RHIN(e) network put a number of research questions on its agenda, which were also relevant to the volume to be discussed here. What exactly is the Rhine region or the Rhine economy? What are its spatial dimensions? What are its borders and did they change over time? Was the Rhine one single or different heterogeneous regions? Were the different regions like

Rhine-Neckar, the Ruhr area or the Rotterdam area separate entities, even though, they were densely linked by transport networks? To what extent was the Rhine the structuring element? The approach to answer these questions is an interregional and a transnational one at the same time in order to avoid a 'traditional study' of regions and their trade relations.

The volume is structured according to the themes and topics of the RHIN(e) conferences and the network's scientific agenda. In an introductory contribution, the editors Ralf Banken and Ben Wubs map the field of the Rhine and the Rhine economy. The first section then turns towards the origins of current day Rhine regulation and trade. It discusses the role of liberal policies, which at the turn of the 18th to the 19th century aimed at limiting tolls and taxes on barging on the Rhine. To guarantee free navigation on the Rhine, the Congress of Vienna set up the CCNR in 1815. In addition, the development of Upper Rhine coal markets between Mannheim and Basel is portrayed as part of regional industrialization. The second section zooms in on the private enterprises and cartels, which played an important role for the development of the Rhine economy. Two contributions deal with the examples of Dutch multinationals in Germany and the Rhenish-Westphalian Coal Syndicate between 1893 and 1945. In the third section, traders and manufacturers of colonial goods and the Rhenish lignite industry are analyzed as individual clusters and sectors of the Rhine economy in the second half of the 19th century. Section four assembles three contributions on infrastructures and ports (oil pipelines, banking and urban restructuring) in the

second half of the 20th century. The fifth section explores transport relations and interdependencies throughout the 20th century by discussing container barge transport between the Rhine and the gateway ports in the Rhine-Scheldt Delta and the structure of transport flows on the Rhine in the interwar period. The final section discusses canalization and pollution in the Rhine region from an environmental history perspective. It is, of course, not possible to discuss the fourteen individual chapters of such a voluminous work within this review article. From a very personal perspective I would like to underline that I have still enjoyed reading Nil Disco's article on the BASF's attempts to clean up the Rhine since the 1970s. The article raises interesting questions about the tensions between the company's costs calculations, the water laws of Rhineland-Pfalz, and the international regulations by the European Community and the international Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution (ICPR).

For me the volume clearly mirrors the intermediate character of the RHIN(e) network. The individual sections mostly cover small periods of the last two centuries – a long term perspective on earlier times is completely missing. The volume has no summary or conclusion, even though, the introduction raises a number of overarching questions and the individual contributions offer rich material and insights. As is often the case in edited volumes, the reader is left alone in compiling his own synopsis. The few sentences at the introduction's end are hardly satisfactory for the reader. What do these articles tell us about the Rhine region and the Rhine economy? Which answers do they give to

the questions that had been discussed by the RHIN(e) network? The editors, in a way, even apologize for only giving a few general and preliminary observations. Unfortunately, the introduction lists the contribution by Christopher Kobrack in the wrong section of the book.

Besides some critical remarks the volume offers rich insights into a field and a topic of (economic) historical research that has been understudied for quite a long time. Therefore, the book is highly recommended.

Hilda Sabato: Republics of the New World. The Revolutionary Political Experiment in Nineteenth-Century Latin America, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2018, 240 p.

Reviewed by
Federica Morelli, Turin

A specialist of the nineteenth-century political history of Argentina, Hilda Sabato offers a valuable and necessary synthetic study of republicanism in nineteenth-century Latin America. This highly readable and accessible volume – full of examples and scarce in footnotes – is suitable for readers who are not necessarily specialists of this particular area and for undergraduates. However, its contributions can equally be useful for those who pursue research on this subject. The author's main objective is explaining the establishment of the republican order as the result of a

historical process – the “republican experiment” as she defines it – rather than the application of an intellectual tradition on republicanism. It is not a book on political philosophy, but on the political and social history of nineteenth-century Latin America. Actually, Sabato's volume focuses on mainland Spanish America in the first fifty years after independence, when a common republican pattern developed and prevailed from the 1820s to the 1870s. Therefore, the Caribbean and Brazil are largely neglected.

For a long period, scholars have considered the pervasive volatility of nineteenth-century Spanish American politics as a symptom of the “failed” modernization of the new polities. The narrative of postcolonial failure belongs to a traditional story, according to which the Global South plays either the laggard or the victim to the historical leadership provided by Europe and the United States. The narrative also has a homegrown, Latin American genealogy that goes back to the end of the nineteenth century when oligarchic governments and their supporters found it convenient to discredit the republican experiments they had recently replaced or abandoned. In recent years, however, historians have been leaving behind the teleological perspectives that informed those views and, rather than try to detect obstacles presumably impeding the road to progress, they now explore how politics actually functioned. No longer considered as an exception, Latin American political history is understood in its own terms and part of the wider history of the republic. Nevertheless, both the master narratives of nineteenth-century Latin America and general world histories do not reflect this