



## Harold James

### AUTHOR

Boards are being asked to plan through a period in which the rules of global trade, finance, and monetary policy are visibly shifting. Leaders need a way to separate a temporary shock from a structural break. Most commentary blurs the two, and strategy built on the wrong reading is expensive to unwind.

Harold James is a Princeton economic historian who helps boards and investors read today's financial and geopolitical shocks through the long arc of globalization, monetary union, and crisis response.

## Harold James's 2026 Biography

### Why organisations work with Harold James

- A historian's answer to the question leaders actually ask in a crisis: is this 1973, 2008, or something new? The framework from *Seven Crashes* gives boards a way to test that judgement rather than guess.
- Institutional access earned as the IMF's official historian, with a chair at Princeton since 1986. Few commentators on globalization sit this close to the machinery they write about.
- A published thesis, not a view of the week: supply-driven crises expand markets, demand-driven crises shrink them. It changes how leaders interpret inflation, tariffs, and capital controls.
- Track record with serious business readers, including the Financial Times Global Business Book Award for the Deutsche Bank history and an FT Best Politics Books selection for *The War of Words*.

### Biography highlights

- Claude and Lore Kelly Professor in European Studies, Princeton University; Professor of History and International Affairs at Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs.
- Official historian of the International Monetary Fund.
- Author of *Seven Crashes: The Economic Crises That Shaped Globalization* (Yale University Press, 2023) and *Making the European Monetary Union* (Harvard University Press, 2012).
- Co-author of the authorised history of Deutsche Bank, winner of the Financial Times Global Business Book Award, 1996.
- Helmut Schmidt Prize for Economic History (2004); Ludwig Erhard Prize for writing about economics (2005); Ellen McArthur Prize for Economic History, Cambridge.
- Monthly columnist for Project Syndicate; associate of Princeton's Bendheim Center for Finance.

### AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Speaking

### HAROLD'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Economic Forecasting
- Economic Trends & Global Markets
- Geopolitics
- Political Risk & Policy
- Risk Management
- Scenario Planning & Strategic Foresight

## Biography

Seven crashes, from the 1840s depression to Covid-19, do not all mean the same thing. In *Seven Crashes* (Yale, 2023), Harold James splits them into crises of supply, which tend to expand markets, and crises of demand, which tend to contract them. That distinction is the working tool he brings into boardrooms.

The intellectual base is Princeton, where James has held the Claude and Lore Kelly Chair in European Studies since joining the faculty in 1986. He is Professor of History and International Affairs at the School of Public and International Affairs and an associate of the Bendheim Center for Finance. *Making the European Monetary Union* (Harvard, 2012) remains a standard reference on how the euro was built and what it assumed about member-state behaviour.

The institutional access is unusual. James is the official historian of the International Monetary Fund, which gives him a documented inside view of how the post-war financial order actually operated through each shock. His authorised history of Deutsche Bank won the Financial Times Global Business Book Award in 1996. *The War of Words*, his glossary of globalization, was named to the Financial Times Best Politics Books of 2021.

For corporate audiences the output is practical. A monthly Project Syndicate column tests his arguments against the news cycle. The Helmut Schmidt Prize (2004), Ludwig Erhard Prize (2005), and Cambridge's Ellen McArthur Prize sit behind that record. When a risk committee is trying to decide whether tariffs, sanctions, or a monetary regime change is a shock or a structural shift, his *Seven Crashes* framework is a clean instrument for forcing that choice.

---

## Key speaking topics

- Globalization cycles and deglobalization
- Financial crises and crisis response
- European monetary union and the euro
- History of central banking
- Germany and the European economy
- International monetary and financial architecture
- Inflation, supply shocks, and political economy

## Ideal for

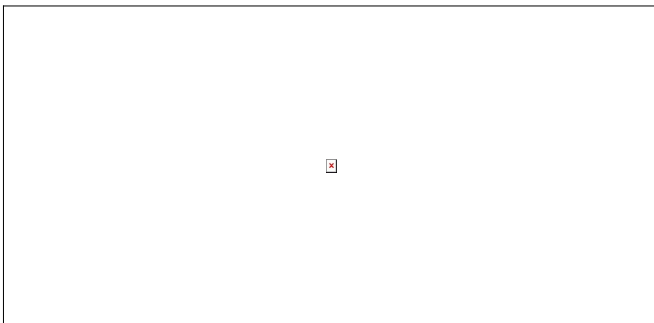
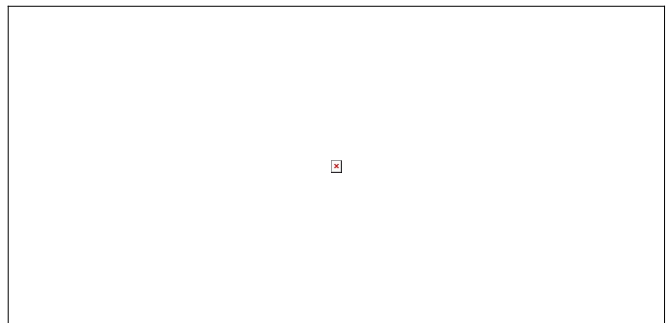
- Bank and asset manager boards setting multi-year macro and rate assumptions
- CROs, CFOs, and treasury leaders testing crisis playbooks against historical precedent
- Policy, regulatory, and central bank forums on monetary union and international finance
- Investor conferences and CEO summits addressing tariffs, sanctions, and the future of trade

## Audience outcomes

- A working distinction between supply-driven and demand-driven crises, with historical cases for each

- A sharper reading of current inflation, tariff, and capital-flow debates against the long record
- Perspective on the euro and European monetary policy from a historian who has written its formal history
- An IMF-informed view of how global financial institutions actually respond when the system is under stress

## Harold James's Videos



## What Harold James's clients say

A book of depth and subtlety that is helpful in understanding matters well outside the questions it seems to address. . . . This is a fascinating and informative book.

**Geoffrey Wood**  
*Central Banking Journal*

The advent of the Euro is a singular event in monetary history. This is the best and most important book so far on an experiment with profound economic and geopolitical implications.

**Lawrence H. Summers**

*Former Secretary, U.S. Treasury*

International divergences in economic policy are as much the result of differences in intellectual frameworks as of variation in economic circumstances. This valuable book explains the critical differences in national economic philosophies and how they have conditioned policy choices over the past decade.

**Ben S. Bernanke**

*Former Chairman, U.S. Federal Reserve*

[The authors] have the advantage of being deeply involved. . . . If Europe is high on your list of concerns, you should read this book; European leaders will.

**David Warsh**

*Economic Principals*

I very much appreciate this book's efforts to explain the highly diverse approaches to economic and fiscal policy in Europe and to shape them into a common strategy. If this could succeed in reality in today's Europe, much would be gained indeed.

**Wolfgang Schäuble**

*Finance Minister of Germany*