

# Editorial Introduction

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We are delighted to introduce and share with you our third volume of the *Central Europe Yearbook*. In three short years the *Yearbook* has grown in significant ways. Though the Center for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota hosts the *Yearbook*, we are not a Minnesota publication, but one, as reflected both by our editorial board and contributors, that is decidedly international. This year's edition includes the scholarship of gifted and dedicated students from seven countries and three continents! From Harvard University to Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, we are presenting contributions this year from literally across the globe. We are also becoming the multilingual publication we had envisioned from our inception, as we feature articles in both English and German this year. The 2021 *Yearbook* also captures the geographic and cultural diversity of Central Europe. Though, as one would expect, there is treatment of the German-speaking lands of the continent, this year we also provide coverage of Bohemia, Transylvania, Poland, northern Italy, and the former Yugoslavia, while two of our articles stretch even further and consider North American connections with Central Europe.

We are also developing into a multidisciplinary publication as we showcase an impressive range of research on Central Europe across a variety of academic fields. Our contributors examine the ephemeral art and architecture of eighteenth-century funerals and the poetry of German expressionists responding to the rapid urbanization of early twentieth-century society. In a special forum we take an in-depth look at one region in particular, early modern Transylvania. From vampires to religious radicals, our three authors consider the social and cultural particularities of this fascinating region caught between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. We also feature a pair of articles that deal with cultural exchange and transatlantic diplomacy in two very different settings. We start with an investigation of Protestant immigrants from Salzburg and their encounter with native groups in eighteenth-century Georgia before moving later to Cold War America and a critical trade delegation to Yugoslavia in 1958.

In this edition we also revisit old themes of the region from new perspectives. Nationalism is a thread that runs through many of our articles. We trace it in a more traditional manner with an investigation of Giuseppe Mazzini working for Italian unification against the backdrop of an Austrian state eager to quell patriotic sentiments in their territory. Two of our essays pair nationalism with a consideration of military developments. We explore the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and seek to understand how failed military reforms contributed to the collapse and ultimate disappearance of the state in the late eighteenth century. We then move to the nineteenth century and the Habsburg lands as we examine

how the army as a multiethnic institution actually contributed to the stability and longevity of the Habsburg state, a bulwark against swirling nationalist currents.

Our authors also tackle some of the thorniest political questions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Central Europe. In a fascinating investigation of one of the most iconic figures of the German past, Otto von Bismarck, we consider one of the most radical steps he undertook as chancellor. His 1885 expulsion of non-naturalized Poles and Jews from Prussian lands foreshadowed the more dramatic population transfers that would occur in the next century. Our edition also includes a thoughtful examination of Salzburg at the end of the World War I and the emerging influence of Austrian socialists. What tactics did Salzburg's socialists adopt with the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy? Were they leading a "revolution"? How did the term "revolution" itself take on different meanings and significance in the politically dynamic postwar period?

Finally, a few words about our first two contributions that set the tone of this edition in important ways. We begin by commemorating the 350th birthday of one of the most celebrated figures of the Czech past, John Amos Comenius. Comenius, the last bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, is best known for his contributions in the field of education. In a creative digital project that blends both Czech and English, we are introduced to two of Comenius's great masterpieces: the *Orbis pictus* (*Visible World in Pictures*; 1658), the first illustrated children's book and language primer, and the *Labyrint světa* (*Labyrinth of the World*; 1623), a powerful dystopia that chronicles the wanderings of a seventeenth-century pilgrim through a dark and distorted landscape eerily reminiscent of our planet today. Despite the dangers and deceptions of his world, Comenius ultimately has a message of hope that is equally relevant, one that embraces human dignity and worth.

We hear echoes of Comenius in the opening interview of our edition where we feature a conversation with one of the most prominent scholars of Central Europe in North America today. Professor Mary Lindemann, former president of both the American Historical Association and the German Studies Association, reflects on her journey to the university and her subsequent career in academia. In words that could have come directly from Comenius, she offers an eloquent defense of the humanities and social sciences in our own time of crisis in this new age of COVID.