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## NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

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### VÁCLAV HOLEŠOVSKÝ, 1924–1981

Václav Holešovský, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, died of cancer on April 19, 1981. He was born in Prague, where he earned his teacher's certificate in Russian and Czech at Charles University. During this time, he was active in the student social-democratic organization, working against the merger with the communists. After leaving Czechoslovakia in 1948, he received the diploma of the School of Political Science of the University of Paris and completed courses at the Sorbonne proper, where he concentrated on Hegel and on labor economics. Later he received his M. A. and Ph. D. degrees in economics from Columbia University.

Holešovský's main teaching interests were the economies of the Soviet Union and the Soviet area and the comparison of economic systems. He published a text on comparative economic systems in 1977. Holešovský pursued a long-term concern with a modern, nonideological approach to Marxism and Marxist economics. At the time of his death, he was planning a popular book and a monograph on this subject.

In addition to the textbook, Holešovský published articles and book reviews in a wide range of journals, such as the *American Economic Review*, the *Slavic Review*, *Dissent*, *Problems of Communism*, *New America*, and *Proměny*, as well as chapters in collections of essays. He contributed an entry to an international encyclopedia, published by Herder in Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna in 1970, an English version of which has appeared under the title, *Marxism, Communism and Western Society: a Comparative Encyclopedia*, published by Herder and Herder in New York during 1972 and 1973.

Václav Holešovský was a man of broad knowledge, clear intelligence, and deep concern with the major issues of our time. He had the courage to take positions that were both rational and humanitarian.

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### ROBERT A. KANN, 1906–1981

The historical profession lost an illustrious member when Robert A. Kann died in Vienna on August 30, 1981. He was seventy-five and at the peak of his intellectual powers. A few days earlier the Austrian government had appointed him Honorary Lifetime Professor of Modern History at the University of Vienna.

Robert Kann was born in Vienna on February 11, 1906, of a middle-class family. Very early he developed a love for history, which he pursued while earning his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree in 1930 at the University of Vienna. In the thirties he worked as a judge's assistant and in private law practice. Because of the domination of fascism and nazism in Austria, he and his wife left the country in August 1938, going first to England and then early in 1939 to the United States. They arrived with few material possessions but with a dogged resolve to work, study, and advance in their new homeland. Kann received a degree in library science in 1940 from Columbia University and worked as a research associate at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Columbia awarded him the Ph. D. in history in 1946. In the seminar on nationalism conducted by Carlton J. H. Hayes, Kann fashioned a dissertation that was to comprise volume two of his initial and most renowned work, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918*, 2 vols. (1950; 1964; 1970; updated

German ed., 1964). It was greeted as a pathbreaking study and thrust him, at age forty-four, into the front rank of Habsburg specialists.

Kann was appointed to the history faculty in 1947 at Rutgers University in Newark. He attained the rank of full professor in 1956 and taught also in the graduate program at the Rutgers campus in New Brunswick. His seminars nurtured nine doctorates and numerous masters' degrees in Central and East European history. He served as visiting professor of history at Columbia and Princeton and in 1973–74 at the University of Vienna. From his retirement in 1976 until 1981 Kann was a visiting professor at the University of Vienna. The Vienna years were his most intense and in some ways his most productive. He lectured frequently throughout Europe, and a quarter of his total written output appeared during that time. But he returned occasionally to the United States, where he retained his Princeton home, which was a magnet for scholars seeking witty, humane, and informed colloquy.

In seventeen books (two more will appear posthumously), three monographs, and over ninety articles, Kann's interests extended into literature and psychology, historical theory, military history, and the problem of monarchical restoration. The entire history of the Habsburg realm lay within his field of vision, but he was most at home in its last two centuries, where intimate knowledge of the sources lent special weight to his judgments. He respected those who differed with him but stoutly defended his own views, and many an unwary editor or reviewer felt the force of his rebuttal. Basically he regarded himself as a historian of ideas, with a two-fold mission of analyzing great ideas in their historical setting and of evaluating the impact of ideas upon contemporaries regardless of the intellectual weight of those ideas in themselves. This approach is evident in his work *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History: from Late Baroque to Romanticism* (1960; 2nd ed., 1973; German ed., 1962). The connection between individual actions and state policy also fascinated him. His studies of the Prochaska Affair, of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and of the Sixtus Affair have deepened our understanding of the monarchy's course in the era of World War I.

Kann was the first modern historian of Austro-German origin to give balanced attention to the Slavic peoples of the Habsburg empire. From his early works onward, through his volume *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526–1918* (1974; 1977; 1980; rev. German ed., 1977) and including the forthcoming work *The Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands, 1526–1918*, which he coauthored, he attempted to avoid the traditional Germanocentric bias against the Slavs. Although his scholarship depended heavily on German, French, and English sources, he enlarged his knowledge through travel and research in Eastern Europe and collaboration with Slavic scholars. Hence he was able to depict the dynamic impulses that developed among the Slavs both as individual peoples and within the overall context of their evolution under Habsburg rule. Avoiding sentimentality over the empire's dissolution, he remained the objective diagnostician who held it was the historian's primary task to identify, explain, and appraise the factors that caused its demise.

Robert Kann's noble standards of teaching and scholarship, his selfless aid to colleagues, his voluminous writings, and his total commitment to the historian's craft will continue to shape Habsburg and East European studies for a long time. The magnitude of his achievement may console those who knew and miss him and above all his wife and partner in the life of scholarship, Marie, their son and daughter, and their granddaughter.

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