

## FROM THE EDITORS

In its thirty-seven year existence, only once before has *Central European History* undergone a change in editorship. That history makes statements of policy from the editor extremely rare events, one by Douglas Unfug in 1968 and one by Kenneth Barkin in 1992, and the legacy of their excellent work places an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of any new editor who succeeds them.<sup>1</sup>

As Roger Chickering's appreciation elsewhere in this issue makes clear, Ken Barkin deserves the gratitude of all members of the Conference Group for Central European History, not to mention the succeeding editor, for nurturing the journal through important transitions and building its eminence ever higher. In his quiet and low-key manner, Ken ensured that *Central European History* remained a central institution in the intellectual lives of established scholars and newcomers to the discipline, even as it adapted to methodological shifts and to the radical changes in the scholarly field opened up by the revolution of 1989–90 in Germany. Together with his incisive and ever *gründlich* Assistant Editor, Ursula Marcum, Ken passes on a journal that is healthy and thriving, respected and eminent, established and adaptive.

Building upon the solid condition in which the journal finds itself, I intend to pursue an editorial strategy of continuity and innovation. Simply put, my foremost goal as editor is to ensure that *Central European History* simultaneously reflects and drives the intellectual direction(s) of its eponymous field. My first ambition therefore is to recruit manuscripts for articles that help reshape how historians think about the history of German-speaking Central Europe, and especially those which explore newer methodological approaches. I want *Central European History* to be the unchallenged first-choice forum, the journal of record, for the most important scholarly articles in that field. I invite such submissions from members of the Conference Group and from all readers. To help promote this end, I will also regularize a commitment to thematic or topical issues, add more historiographical review essays, and institutionalize a "forum" of articles and commentary to serve as a stimulating scholarly interchange.<sup>2</sup> In terms of topics for manuscripts, I wish to renew Ken's 1992 appeal

1. "From the Editors," *Central European History* 1 (1968): 3; "Editor's Letter," *Central European History* 24 (1991): v–vi.

2. The forum has already been introduced under Ken Barkin; see the article by Marcus Kreuzer, "Parliamentarization and the Question of German Exceptionalism: 1867–1918," and the comments by Sperber and Ledford, and reply by Kreuzer, *Central European History* 36 (2003): 327–81.

for articles of comparative history, as well as to echo the desire, expressed in his final issue, to receive more submissions treating the early modern era and more that deal with the history of the Habsburg lands. I invite article submissions of all methodological perspectives, from cultural studies and discourse analysis, to social history, to quantitative economic history, to political and diplomatic history.

My second ambition, necessarily one which will be implemented over time, is to integrate the journal better into the new possibilities presented by electronic publishing. This will certainly involve active work to make *Central European History* ever more easily available to subscribers, individual and institutional alike, in electronic form, and it will also entail creation of a useful and interactive Web site and eventually the innovative use of the Internet to tell a new kind of history, one that involves images, still and moving, sound, interactivity. The future of the print scholarly journal, I believe, lies in the scrupulous embrace of new technologies.

The new editorial regime introduces a division of labor among editorial personnel. For the first time, book reviews will be administered by the Associate Editor, Professor Catherine Epstein of Amherst College. Catherine will determine which books to send out for review, commission the reviewers, and work to maintain a high level of critical intellectual discourse about the history of German-speaking Central Europe in the review pages of the journal. As is the case with many other academic journals, the primary qualification to be commissioned as a reviewer is the publication of a major monograph. This ensures that reviewers have experienced the peer review process themselves and understand the production of a historical monograph. Not every book published on the history of Central Europe can be reviewed in *Central European History*, but we will seek to review all significant volumes and in particular to promote and maintain scholarly discourse among specialists in Central European history in Germany and North America. Together, Catherine and I wish also to continue and expand Ken Barkin's policy of frequent historiographical and review essays. As newly indicated in the front matter of this issue, the most efficient means of communicating with Catherine is through e-mail at [ceh@amherst.edu](mailto:ceh@amherst.edu).

All article manuscripts should be directed to me at Case Western Reserve University. The Assistant Editor, Gayle Godek, and I will be responsible for the article manuscript review process and all copyediting and production work, including that pertaining to book reviews. All editorial decisions are my responsibility, although I intend to consult with the Associate Editor and Editorial Board on important matters of policy. Again, e-mail represents the most efficient means of communicating with Gayle and me, at [centraleuropeanhistory@case.edu](mailto:centraleuropeanhistory@case.edu).

Another immediately apparent innovation will be the transition to an electronic system of article submission by e-mail attachment. This change aims both

to speed and reduce the cost of the submission and review process. I intend also to solicit manuscript readers by e-mail and to transmit manuscripts and receive reports electronically, again to reduce delay and to eliminate postage. I will make every effort to continue Ken Barkin's policy that authors who submit articles receive a decision on their manuscripts within three months of submission, and that accepted articles appear within fifteen months of acceptance. There is at present a healthy inventory of accepted articles, but it is not so large as to discourage new submissions. In order to maintain a rapid pace of submission, review, and decision, I ask all authors who submit their manuscripts to read carefully and conform to the guidelines for submission printed in the front matter of each issue.

As I indicated above and as this issue reflects, thematic or topical issues are one conscious way in which *Central European History* can place itself at the forefront of the field and be of greatest use to its subscribers and to the entire scholarly community. I intend to devote about one issue per volume to a topic or theme, and I invite scholars whose conference panels represent important contributions as a whole to consider a joint submission of the papers. I intend to commission other thematic issues as my judgment suggests.

This current issue treats from the North American perspective the important conversation that has arisen in Germany since W. G. Sebald's 1997 lectures on the air war appeared in 1999, a debate that frames a discourse about Germans as victims in the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> Günter Grass's subsequent novel, *Im Krebsgang* (2002), and Jörg Friedrich's *Der Brand* (2002) and *Die Brandstätten* (2003) intensified public discussion in Germany, but this discourse failed to evoke within the United States, even after the translation of Sebald and Grass, the same resonance and debate as did the *Historikerstreit* of 1986–87.<sup>4</sup> Three essays examine the historiographical moment that has led to this phenomenon (Mary Nolan); the gendered nature of accounts of German victimhood during the war (Elizabeth Heineman); and the contextualized nature of the air war itself (Thomas Childers). It is my hope that this topical issue will make an important contribution by North American scholars to the discussion in Germany as it builds upon the excellent work already produced here in the field of history and memory.

My goal then, together with the other editors, is to embark from the Unfug-Barkin starting point of thirty-seven years' stewardship of *Central European History* as a scholarly journal of eminence and excellence, to conserve its strengths, and to open it to new departures. I look forward to working with the

3. W. G. Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1999), and idem, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Random House, 2003).

4. Günter Grass, *Im Krebsgang. Eine Novelle* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2002); idem, *Crabwalk*, trans. Krishna Winston (New York: Harcourt, 2002); Jörg Friedrich, *Der Brand. Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940–45* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2002).

Editorial Board of the journal, the Executive Committee of the Conference Group, the members of the Conference Group, and the profession as a whole to keep the journal stimulating and innovative.

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