

Editors' Notes

IN THIS ISSUE the word "identity" actually appears in only one title, but the reader will find that a central thread that runs through all the articles is a discussion of the ways in which the Habsburg monarchy and Austria shaped and then reshaped their identity and outlook over the decades. We begin with Ernst Wangermann's "Moral Optimism and the Fine Arts." This article had its origins as the Kann Memorial Lecture and keynote address at the twentieth-anniversary symposium of the Center for Austrian Studies, "The Great Tradition: Dramatic and Musical Theater in Austrian and Central European Society," held in Minneapolis in October 1997. We wish you all could have been there to hear this erudite and delightful lecture by Professor Wangermann, delivered with his grace and charm, but all the same, we think you will find it a pleasure to read. In this article we are immersed in the optimistic motif of the Enlightenment and the intertwining of philosophy and art, as well as the reception of Enlightenment themes in the Habsburg lands.

In the central body of the journal, the other authors then take us, in order, on a journey that continues up to the latter half of the twentieth century, with an exploration of the vicissitudes of Austria's search for identity and political positioning, particularly in the interwar period, its stature during the war itself, and the well-known phenomenon of reinventing itself after the war as "victim" and as a democratic and at the same time solidarist state. Of particular note is the way in which Maurice Williams examines the "World of an Austrian Nazi," the coming to fruition of the thought involved in the articles by Michael John and R. John Rath, and in so doing deals with a seldom discussed phenomenon, the actual thought and workings in the National Socialist period. What we find in the protagonist of the article is not only a Nazi leader, but someone in the early postwar period making the transition to the next period, that of the new democratic and innocent Austria. Peter Utgaard then takes us into the realm of the specific circumstances, thoughts, and deeds giving rise to Austria's post-World War II self-image.

In the end we present a most informative forum that returns to the period of the beginning of the volume, the age of the Counter-Reformation and Enlightenment, wherein the Austrian dialectic between the ideas of the Enlightenment and those of faith, church, and state authoritarianism and hierarchy is played out. All of which may cause us to reflect on the long chain of influences on thought and action in the region from the seventeenth century on into our own age. We hope that you find the journey rewarding.

HUGH AGNEW IS now retiring from the position of book review editor. We want to thank him for his valiant service and to wish him well. We welcome Catherine Albrecht of the University of Baltimore, who will replace him in the next volume and has already begun to help in this one. We thank all our hardworking editorial staff, advisers, reviewers, and assistants, here and abroad, and especially thank the Austrian Cultural Institute in New York for its generous financial contribution to this volume.