
Editorial

It is an exciting thing to launch a new journal, and in this case it reflects the fact that we in Europe are living in interesting times. We are clearly on the brink of a new Europe: 1992 will see the United Kingdom and Ireland more fully integrated into the European Community, and *glasnost* has set in train unknown but certainly far-reaching changes in the USSR and Eastern and East Central Europe. Beyond this, year by year the concept of Europe as both a geographical and an historical entity becomes more credible, and there is increasing interest, not only in the histories of individual countries, but in how their histories compare with each other.

The journal will cover twentieth-century – and later – European history in its widest sense, encompassing Eastern and Western Europe, including the United Kingdom, and covering the period from about 1918 to the present, although articles dealing with developments since 1940 will be especially welcome. In our own minds there is a continuity between pre- and post-war European history, since the perspective of time makes 1945 appear less of a break with the past than it once seemed. Indeed, the journal will on occasion carry comparisons of pre- and post-Second World War developments, as in the forthcoming thematic issue dealing with recession both in the 1920s/30s and 1970s/80s. *Contemporary European History* will publish articles on most major areas of history – political, diplomatic, cultural, social and economic – with an emphasis, as far as work produced allows, on the publication of issues (if not always articles) based on a comparative approach. Significantly, one issue a year will concentrate on a particular historical theme.

Our intention is to be flexible, and along with archive-based research articles, we hope to publish occasional essays on current topics of interest to historians. We are acutely aware of how insular most of us are, whether within our national communities or within our own branches of history, and we hope the journal will open up interdisciplinary and international debate. For example, we hope to publish articles in the future on the reconstruction of history and of the profession in the East Central European countries and on what is exciting contemporary historians in various countries.

We hope to use the journal as a noticeboard for the profession. We all know about publishing or research ventures, about new research institutes, or about useful conferences in our own fields. What is difficult to find out is what is happening in

contiguous fields, except by the accident of personal contacts. We plan, therefore, to publish in each issue a **Noticeboard** section, to cover precisely those areas of interest. In the current issue, for example, there is news about institutes in Prague, Vienna and London, about research ventures in Germany, and about the Anglo-American Conferences of Historians in London. We would like to encourage readers to send in news in which they think other historians would be interested.

It can be almost as difficult to find out about historical journals in other countries, and *Contemporary European History* will try to provide such information. Each year we will publish a critical survey of the twentieth-century history journals of one country. We begin with those of Italy, and eager readers can turn to Jonathan Morris' *Italian Journals: A User's Guide* for enlightenment. In future issues there will be surveys of Scandinavian, French, German and Spanish journals.

The editors are not convinced, however, that the historical profession needs another venue for individual book reviews. Yet, there is no gainsaying the fact that review articles can be immensely useful and stimulating. We plan, therefore, to concentrate on precisely these, although we will sometimes publish reviews of important individual books, particularly those written in languages other than English.

Although this is an English-language journal, we do not want its usefulness to be limited to English-language historians. We are printing abstracts of all articles in French and German as well as in English, so that non-Anglophone colleagues can determine whether an article is worth their effort to translate. Beyond that, we welcome the submission of articles by non-English-speaking historians in either their native language or in translation. In the first case, we will have them refereed – as will be all articles written for us – and if they are deemed to be of the quality expected, we will undertake their translation.

Nevertheless, the heart of any academic journal is the range and quality of its research articles. The articles in this issue – covering Spain, Germany and Britain – include political, diplomatic and social history. You will find articles, reviews of journals as well as books, and the transcription of an oral history seminar on the birth of the Eurobond market. Issue number two will include amongst other items a long comparative essay on the decline of European communist parties between 1939 and 1949 and a look at the treatment of history in the East Central European countries. The third issue will be thematic – as the third issue will be each year – concentrating on the role of central banks in the politics of several European countries during the interwar period. Future thematic issues will look at recession in the 1920s/30s and the 1970s/80s, and at a divided Germany within a divided Europe.

Contemporary European History will not be a hostage to any particular school of historical writing and will consider all submissions on their individual merits. Our interests are not exclusively economic, or social, or political. Rather, we will welcome contributions which attempt to straddle these often discrete areas of research. We are also concerned to provide coverage of the smaller as well as the larger European states; and we will be especially interested in international historical comparisons.

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