SUMMARIES

HOMAGE TO ERNEST GELLNER

Eva Hahn

The author, giving the gist of Ernest Gellner’s numerous writings and summing up an interview she conducted with him, offers an essay on life and work of this important British philosopher. Though born in Paris 70 years ago, Gellner grew up in Prague, whence, facing the threat of persecution by the Nazis, he and his family fled to Britain in 1939. A member of the Czechoslovak army in exile, he came back in 1945, only to leave again, for political reasons, a few months later. Ever since, while living in Britain, he has shown a vivid interest for Central European culture and history. While his writings on heuristics and cultural anthropology have elicited praise from all over the world (his book on Nations and Nationalism having been translated in 20 languages), his relationship to the Bohemian lands and especially to Prague are not as widely known. This is why this contribution centers on Gellner’s recollections of his Prague experience and his views of the Bohemian lands past and present.

THE HABSBURG MONARCHY: PAST IN THE PRESENT?

Monika Glettler

In this study, a comparative analysis is carried out between the ethnic and cultural plurality of modern-day Europe and the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire. The main question here is whether it makes sense to live by the principle of national homogeneity even where the multi-ethnic is, one might say, nothing out of the ordinary. The problem is analyzed by reexamining three relevant cases with regard to integrating and disintegrating factors in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the principal aspect being the relationship between the “equal status of the nationalities” on one hand and the differences which existed with regard to the demographic, economic, and cultural situation on the other. In every case, the constitutional stipulation is juxtaposed to what happened in reality. The three chosen examples are the Badeni language regulations of 1897 and the national “compromises” in Moravia (1905) and the Bukovina (1909/10). The conclusion is that seeking among the experience, positive as well as negative, of the Habsburg Monarchy, explanations for today’s neo-nationalism and clues as to which ideas might make possible a multinational state as well as a common, peaceful Europe is not altogether futile.