

preparation of an edition of *Johannis Amos Comenii Opera omnia*. The edition began to appear in 1969 and comprises up to the present day 15 volumes out of a proposed 60. The aim of the edition is to present a reliable text of the edited works and manuscripts, with a textual appendix recording the changes undergone by each work during the author's life. The explanatory notes deal with the context—historical, philosophical, theological, etc.—of Comenius' work, with its sources and textual parallels. The editorial team consists primarily of philologists, but historians and philosophers are also represented. Among the present members of the editorial team are two direct pupils of the founders of the edition, Dr Martin Steiner and Dr Jiří Beneš, both philologists and outstanding Comenius scholars.

Another project connected directly with the edition is the difficult task of establishing an authoritative edition of Comenius' correspondence. The project started in 1995; its aim is to create a computer database of all the surviving letters of Comenius and to publish two volumes listing his correspondence. This list will not only be of basic importance for Comenius studies, but furthermore it also relates to the study of seventeenth-century Bohemian cultural history, to the history of the Bohemian exile after the Battle of the White Mountain, last but not least to the history of ideas and intellectual communication in seventeenth-century Europe. In this broader context the project is closely connected with the Hartlib Papers Project (University of Sheffield) as well as with the project to establish a co-ordinated electronic database of crucial manuscript materials (particularly the correspondence of outstanding intellectuals) of the seventeenth century.

Let me now say a few words about the international review of Comenius studies, *Acta Comeniana*. The review followed the *Archive pro badání o životě a spisech J. A. Komenského* founded in 1910 by Ján Kvačala, an outstanding Comenius, Campanella, Alsted, and Leibniz scholar. After interruption to its publication during World War II, production of the journal was resumed in 1957 (with the sub-title *Acta Comeniana*). Since 1969 it has been issued as a serial published in the major languages. A respectable level of scholarship was maintained in the review during the last decade of the communist regime thanks to the general editor Dr Marta Bečková, an expert on Comenius and seventeenth-century Polish history. I collaborated with her as the co-editor of the last vol-

umes. After the 400th anniversary of J. A. Comenius' birth, commemorated also by Volume 10 of *Acta Comeniana*, we felt that some period of Comenius studies as well as of the history of *Acta Comeniana* had finished. We decided to change the orientation of the review slightly, opening it to wider discussion in the field of early modern intellectual history. The first result is Volume 11 of *Acta Comeniana*, which has been published recently. It contains seven articles dealing with matters other than Comenius: Descartes, political theory of the Bohemian Estates' Revolt, seventeenth-century panpsychism and hylozoism, Antitrinitarianism in Bohemia, etc. We have enlarged the number of book reviews and offer a good survey of books on Early Modern Intellectual History published by Central-European scholars in minor languages. We intend to publish *Acta* annually, but as you surely understand the realization of these purposes is dependent upon the interest of the international reading public. We shall probably lose some interested among pedagogues, but I hope we shall find many new ones among historians of ideas, historians of science, historians of intellectual life.

I was able to come to London thanks to the kind recommendation of Dr Charles Webster and his concern for the review *Acta Comeniana*. To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to him and to the *spiritus agens* of the enterprise, Constance Blackwell, for their support.

A View from afar—The International Society for Intellectual History

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Coming from a country on the periphery, with a language that few handle with ease outside Scandinavia, the first thing we realize is that nothing is more crucial than the way we write. History and ideas cannot be abstracted from language and national styles without a loss of the very essence of our cultures. While we all teach the central European canon, from Christine de Pisan to Machiavelli, from Vico to Walter Benjamin, most of us work in local archives and do research in our national traditions.

Although the languages of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are close, and while there are many Swedish-speaking scholars in Finland, there still is very little real co-operation. Very few northern comparisons have been made; much work has instead been directed to studying the reception of various European phenomena in national contexts.

Typical research programmes in my northern vicinity are studies of the rise of, and more recent threats to, the 'Swedish model' of paternalistic social engineering: localized studies of the national social programs for good living, good taste, good hygiene, even sex education, to the rise of sophisticated distributional economics. Earlier studies concentrate on local intellectual milieux, depicting the slow reception of the Enlightenment in the small town of Calmar in 1780–1820 (using Graham Swift's *Waterland*), or investigating the culture of sociability of country spas. There is much interest in counter-cultures: on the constitution of gender and the female image in the eighteenth-century literary press, in the activities and debates of early student societies, in the proliferation of spiritism and theosophical societies. Counter-Enlightenment trends are studied by re-editing texts on alchemy and romanticism, nostalgic studies of medieval architectural trends, examination of biomedical ideas of *fin-de-siècle* Oscarian society, and in the emergence of the criticism of mass culture.

A recent trend attempts to avoid seeing past centuries in relation to modernization, but instead to see them in terms of their own ideology. This might mean a study of the growth of Gothic myths. For example, myths fabricated to solidify the national understanding in Sweden/Finland from about 1450 to 1750, when Gothicism finally was discredited scientifically and abandoned because of an influx of cosmopolitan ideals. It is fascinating to follow the changes in function of these Gothic ideologies through the generations. They were formulated as a mytho-poetic response to centralizing Catholic trends by Johannes Magnus in the early sixteenth century on his visit to Rome, and later used as a literary format by Masonic historicists such as Olof von Dalin. The perspective has now shifted from seeing how a cul-

ture on the periphery merely receives ideas through its own special filter, to the attempt to get closer to the indigenous conditions themselves, to those ideas that shaped the dreams of northern culture, even with its complex web of misunderstanding and myths.

The most natural conference for us would be the biennial Nordic Conference, but although the languages of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are close, and while there are many Swedish-speaking scholars in Finland, there still is very little real co-operation of this sort. Very few northern comparisons have been made; much work has instead been directed to studying the reception of various European phenomena in national contexts; on the emergence of Paracelsism in Sweden, on the apparent lack of a solid 'French Enlightenment' in Sweden, on the reception of Darwin, Freud, Jung, Cassirer in Sweden, etc. Philosophy has its share, from studies on the academic Hegelian Johan Jacob Boström, to the conceptual critic Adolph Phalén and the value-nihilist Axel Hägerström. With this localized interest, the writing of biographies has returned as a serious intellectual genre in Sweden. There is, however, a stronger current of interest in studying the thought-collectives and thinking styles made visible in localized debates, that is, with an emphasis on Skinner-type readings of confrontation and rhetorical strategies.

It is to be hoped that an international meeting-place for intellectual history in itself would create new topics, and by this confrontation of styles make possible bolder comparisons between national traditions. The recent tendency that historical study of Swedish cultural connections in Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Estonia, etc. has taken—a sort of Euro-diplomacy cultivated by linguistic specialists in the various languages concerned—could thus be redirected. Instead these topics of art and literature could, if opportunity was given, be integrated into what is normally done in departments of intellectual history. In this sense the first International Conference for Intellectual History can open up new vistas and perhaps approach the influence of the widely attended History of Science conferences.

For reference

Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina and Her Circle: the Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

—, *Rose Cross Over the Baltic: The Influence of Joachite Sectarians in Northern Europe after 1586* (forthcoming).

The Place of Religious History in Intellectual History

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I am speaking on behalf of four special interest groups.

The first consists of historians of English religion. In a sense it is ironic that I should try to represent them here, since during the past twenty years there has been a very sharp turn away from intellectual history, which is often regarded in this part of the historical woods as foreign and slightly frivolous. I do not mean to denigrate English religious history, despite its having become exceedingly empirical. Only by means of long and tedious research have we learned, for example, that most Englishmen did not want the Reformation and were unhappy with the changes once they came. Yet certainly it is true that this sort of work is not what intellectual historians do. The fact that I usually call myself an historian of religion is mostly the result of the structure of European universities, where historians of ideas have to travel under false passports issued by larger and more powerful academic governments.

In some ways I feel more comfortable representing my second group, researchers into Jewish studies, although I am using the term quite differently from the way it is understood in American universities and among their counterparts in Britain. Sadly, Jewish studies today is misorganized according to vertical rather than horizontal principles. University lecturers in this field are expected not only to teach, but worse, to be interested in anything related to Jews from Abraham to Zionism, with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 as the Whiggish and inevitable culmination of thousands of years of history. For example, historians of the Jews in eighteenth-century France shy away from meeting with scholars of France during the Enlightenment, and instead prefer to compare notes with historians of German Jewry, of Anglo Jewry, or even of Australian

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Jewry, and thereby are largely spared penetrating criticism or debate. The result has been that the field of Jewish studies remains at a comparatively low level.

I would prefer instead to see Jewish studies as a sub-group of general history. In the past fifty years, we have come to realize that the revival of intellectual life during the Renaissance did not involve only the praise of Greece and Rome, but also of Israel and (even if in partly fictitious form) of Egypt as well. Gentile historians have largely failed to integrate Jewish studies into their work, not because of any sinister motive, but because Jewish scholars have kept to themselves, studying in separate departments, attending different conferences, and publishing in specialized Jewish journals often shelved in distant reading rooms. In my own recent book, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850*,¹ I try to remedy this defect at least for England, and try to integrate Jewish and general history.

The third group I represent can only be described as 'Popkin Studies'. By this I mean the work of the disciples and admirers of Professor Richard H. Popkin, those who believe that the history of philosophy and ideas can only be moved forward by the introduction of new material to the existing body of knowledge. A good example of this has been Dick Popkin's recent work on the connection between Spinoza and the English Quakers. His archival research in the Friends House Library in London uncovered documents which show a clear link between Quakers in the Netherlands and Spinoza, which make the Quaker biblical scholar Samuel Fisher somewhat more than a man who by chance had Spinozist ideas at exactly the same time.² Dick Popkin's organization of countless

¹ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

² R. H. Popkin, 'Spinoza, the Quakers and the Millenarians, 1565-1658', *Manuscripta*, 6 (1982): 113-33; idem, 'Spinoza's Relations with the Quakers in Amsterdam', *Quaker History*, 73 (1984): 14-28; idem, 'Spinoza and Samuel Fisher', *Philosophia*, 15 (1985): 219-36; idem and M. S. Singer, *Spinoza's Earliest Publication?* (Assen and Maastricht, 1987), with an introduction and commentary.