

**DRUHÝ BŘEH ZÁPADU. Výbor iberooamerických esejí.\* [The Second Coast of the West: Anthology of Ibero-American essays.] Introduction and editing by Anna Housková.**

Prague: Mladá fronta, 2004,  
ISBN: 80-204-1139-9, 372 pages.

A team of scientists-teachers and PhD students (eleven altogether including the editor of the volume) of the Department of Romance Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, led by renowned Czech Hispanist, Professor Anna Housková, recently published a vast collection of translations of important essays presenting various sides of history, culture and everydayness of the Hispano-American and marginally also of the Luso-American world to Czech readers. Essays from eleven countries of Latin America are presented in the collection. There are 30 translations, mostly from Argentina and Mexico – five each, followed by Cuba and Peru with four essays; Brazil is represented three times, Venezuela, Uruguay and Columbia twice each and the Dominican Republic, Chile and Paraguay once.

In her introduction (pp. 11-26), Hispanist Anna Housková reflects on Ibero-American culture, which is of course not completely unknown to the Czech public. Let us mention some of the works published recently showing the identity of Latin America and its

distinctiveness from Anglophone and Francophone Americas in the north: C. Fuentes, *Pohřbené zrcadlo*. [The Buried Mirror] Praha: Mladá fronta, 2003 (review also being part of this issue), E. Lukavská, *“Zázračné reálno” a magický realismus*. [“Magic Reality” and Magic Realism] Brno: Host, 2003, A. Housková, *Imaginace Hispánské Ameriky. Hispanoamerická kulturní identita v esejích a v románech*. [Imagination of Hispanic America. Hispano-American Cultural Identity in Essays and Novels] Praha: Torst, 1998, or A. Müllerová, *Hledání kulturní identity Španělské Ameriky*. [A Search for Cultural Identity of Spanish America] Thesis, Praha: Filozofická fakulta UK, 1998. Europeans always denoted Latin America and its inhabitants, both autochthonous Indian tribes and since the early Colonial Period Mestizos, Creoles, Mulattos, Zambos, Quadroons and members of other mixed groups<sup>1</sup>, as “the others” and their problems as the “problems of the others” (cf. T. Todorov, 1996). However Latin American thinkers often educated in European and North American universities think differently: “We are the outpost of the West,” *un extremo de Occidente*, as one of them, Mexican Octavio Paz, emphasizes. On the other hand, world-known North American political scientist Samuel Huntington in his controversial book *The Clash of Civilization* published 1996, regards Latin America (Ibero-America) as one of eight independent world civi-

\* The project was subsidized by the Grant Agency of Charles University in a grant called *Iberoamerika jako soužití kultur* [Ibero-America as a Coexistence of Cultures].

<sup>1</sup> Since the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the colonial authorities in Mexico have distinguished sixteen socially clearly differentiated groups (castes).

lizations. From the civilization point of view, at least according to some authors, Latin America represents the most western promontory of Europe. Its situation resembles that of the countries of the Iberian Peninsula where three different cultural worlds co-existed for hundreds of years: Christian, Arabic, or better to say Moorish (Berber-Arabic) and Jewish. In Latin American countries, these three dominant ethno-cultural substrates were joined by the original one – native, Indian; this group was of course not homogeneous. On the contrary, e.g., there were without any doubt bigger differences between Classical Mayans and nomadic North-Mexican tribes than between Iberian Christians and Moors. And due to a highly developed slavery system, the three substrates were soon supplemented by an African one. Already at the end of the Colonial Period, the topic of unity and variability became the main object of self-reflection of Latin American culture and it still continues to be. Within particular Latin American countries, the opposition of civilization and barbarism is most often studied. The topic was most significantly formulated in Argentinian “material” by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in his famous book *Facundo*, which will be discussed later on.

An endeavor to delimit themselves from the powerful northern neighbor is another “eternal” topic for Latin American philosophers and scholars. Some of them, such as the abovementioned Octavio Paz, see in both the civilizations “two various, but probably irreconcilable, versions of western civilization.” Others, like Uruguayan essayist and philosopher José Enrique Rodó, succumbed to the

*Nordo-mania* fashion, whose advocates praise the United States as their ideal.

The review cannot cover all 30 translations; therefore we limit ourselves to the essays that contribute to the studies of cultural identity of Latin America and their topic is more or less related to social/cultural anthropology. The very first essay of the anthology can surprise many readers because it is the famous *Letter from Jamaica* by nobody other than El Libertador (the Liberator) **Simón Bolívar (1783–1830)**. The letter, addressed to British citizen Henry Cullen living in Jamaica, is an outline of Bolívar’s vision of the future America after gaining independence for Latin American countries. Although Bolívar wrote it during battles against colonial oppression, he compares the state of America at that time with the situation when the Roman Empire broke down and each part created a political system suiting its interests leading to the old nations being restored after some time. Bolívar criticizes the disunity of Latin America stemming from indefinite identity: “... we keep only ruins of what had existed, and we are not Indians and not Europeans, but something between legitimate keepers of the country and Spanish conquistadors...” (pp. 30-31). All of Bolívar’s endeavor is aimed at gradual unification of the subcontinent. The center of the subcontinent could have been, according to his ideas, in Mexico or in the Isthmus of Panama<sup>2</sup>. In his *Carta*, Bolívar shows that

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<sup>2</sup> Bolívar was aware of the surviving paternalism of the Latin American countries. Thus he saw in powerful Mexico a paternalistic center capable of caring for their weaker neighbors. Later he promoted the idea of creation of

he was not only a man of the “sword,” but also a man of the “pen<sup>3</sup>,” though his pan-American visions were fulfilled only partly and only temporarily (see his anticipation of a wider Central American union).

Such a representative handbook of Ibero-American essays cannot do without a presentation of one of the pioneer works of not only the essay genre, but of Latin American literature (novel) in general – Sarmiento’s *Facundo*<sup>4</sup>. **D. F. Sarmiento (1811–1888)** captured in this essay, as well as in others, some of the cultural features of cultural identity developed mostly or solely in Latin America. For example, only on the immense Argentinian pampas could the specific nature of their inhabitants have developed. The essay is characteristic by its stoic resignation towards violent death understood as an “accident that is an integral part of life.” In this very space a distinctive type of cultural hero – the “white savage,” the *gaucho* – came to

existence. Sarmiento describes Argentina as a country which by the character of its nature strongly determines the customs of its inhabitants. The pampas (excluding Patagonia in the south of Argentina) were practically not populated when the first Europeans came, as if even nomadic Indian tribes did not want to proceed in their depths. The gaucho in Sarmiento’s various versions of “gaucho – tracker,” “gaucho – guide,” or “gaucho – singer” replaced the “traditional” representative of savagery and barbarism (Indian, Zambo, Cimarrón, etc.) in Argentina as well as in South America more generally. The gaucho became an opposition to the bearers of civilizational cultural values – urban inhabitants personified in Sarmiento’s Argentina almost exclusively by the inhabitants of Buenos Aires<sup>5</sup>. This “environmental heritage” has survived in Argentina until today to some degree. The pampas as well as all the Argentine countryside are still divided into hundreds of private “feudal” lands, a fertile land where another Latin American social (arche)type comes from – the *caudillo*, an unlimited, generally

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a metropolis in Panama where he expected the formation of a world trade crossroad. In 1826 (June 22 – July 15), congress was summoned to Panama for the purpose of creating a constitution of the Pan-American confederation where Bolivar vainly tried to enforce the idea of the formation of “the greatest nation in the world.”

<sup>3</sup> The publishing of his political speeches and letters numbering 11 volumes in total simultaneously anticipates the Hispano-American essayist genre.

<sup>4</sup> The whole title of the essay from 1845 is: *Civilización y barbarie: vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga. Aspecto físico, costumbres y hábitos de la República Argentina (Civilization and barbarism: the life of Juan Facundo Quiroga. Physical aspects, traditions and lifestyle of the Argentine Republic).*

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<sup>5</sup> At the time when Sarmiento was writing his book, most of the other Argentine cities also lived with a few exceptions from pasturage. Nevertheless, livestock was then bred for the most part in Buenos Aires proper. Recently the Argentine authorities attempted to somehow cultivate the areas southward of Buenos Aires. They came up with a project of shifting part of the state administration to the smaller city of Viedma, which should become the basis for the future settlement of the pampas. The new settlers should mainly be European immigrants who were attracted to purchasing the lands for very low prices. As far as I know this attempt failed or was postponed.

uneducated leader, mostly a representative of the “barbarian” world that often allows him to rise, even as high as to the function of presidency<sup>6</sup>.

**Ezequiel Martínez Estrada (1895–1964)** returned in his works almost one hundred years after Sarmiento to the opposition of city vs. countryside. In the collection, he is represented by the first chapter of the fourth part (pp. 130-133) of his *Radiografía de la pampa* (1933) devoted to Buenos Aires. Inhabitants of the Argentine capital (*porteños*) are described as those who rejected the inland as they were not brave enough to enter it after they had crossed the ocean. On the contrary, they gradually built a “dream paradise of laziness” beyond the borders of which lies a foreign country, a gaucho’s pampas, so vividly described by Sarmiento. Can there be a better place on Earth where the *art of idleness (arte del ocio)* proliferates, as J. E. Rodó once put it, than the area of La Plata?

“Our America,” “Nuestra América,” an essay from 1891, is one of the best of the Hispano-American essays (pp. 55-63). Its author is Cuban politician, writer, and reporter **José Martí (1853–1895)**. Although Martí spent part of his life in the USA where he met with American principles of society and culture, he felt a temperamental need to disqualify himself from North America in his essays. In North America he saw a much bigger danger for Cuba and Latin

America than in Spanish dominance, against which he fought actively. Firstly, he saw the danger in ignorance and intentional incomprehension: “...*Disdain of the huge neighbor, who does not know our America, is its biggest danger*” (p. 62). Martí turns away from the idea of positivist progress. He does not find any ideals in contemporary Europe and in the USA worth following. He finds them in the past, thus becoming one of the first thinkers lauding the colonial past of Spanish America and Indian roots. According to him, this is the only way to reach the “unity of continental spirit” spanning from Rio Bravo to the Strait of Magellan.

As just a feeble pick at the thoughts of more biologically oriented colleagues, I add that Martí did not accept the term *race*. He suggested that those who operate with it often unintentionally stir up polarity and hate among groups of different cultures and languages.

The next essay of the collection inveighs against blind *Nordo-mania* (pp. 65-77). It is the fifth chapter of the book of Ariel (1900) written by Uruguayan thinker **José Enrique Rodó (1871–1917)**. He along with José Martí and Nicaraguan Rubén Darí are considered the founding trio of Hispano-American modernism. Rodó also delimits himself against the United States, but contrary to Martí he does not leave aside Indian tradition and the present<sup>7</sup>. He is aware of the

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<sup>6</sup> Sarmiento himself lived under one of the worst Latin American dictatorships of President Juan Manuel de Rosas. The cruel dictatorial regime was in Argentina in the second half of the 1970s when the military junta governed there.

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<sup>7</sup> No Indian people lived any longer in the territory of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay in the time of Rodó. The former Uruguay was always only sporadically settled by native people. The *Charrúa* were one exception, but in fact they were exterminated during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

uncontrollable penetration of the *American way of life*, the desire for material success and abundance in America. Nevertheless, Rodó's essay is not an autotelic critique of the USA because, as he says: "... even though I do not like them, I admire them..." (p. 67). He admires firstly the enormous will to *want*, the ability of great determination to work and create, the courage to risk. Could this be the source of the more and more apparent ambivalence of Latino-Americans towards North America? Rodó is also aware of certain mental differences within the United States. He notices that the center of power is shifting from the eastern "Atlantic" states to the "Pacific" West. The following words, that after more than one hundred years still seem to be prophetic, target today's Californians and Texans, the main bearers of so-called *pocha culture*<sup>8</sup>: "...Utilitarianism disengaged from its ideal content, cosmopolitan vagueness and the superficiality of bastardly democracy will probably triumph..." (p. 74). However, when we reflect on the identity of the bearers of this "defective" or "bastardly" culture, a problem emerges. Who is the most responsible for the spread of such a *hybrid culture*<sup>9</sup>, e.g., in Los Angeles, where the majority is nowadays of Hispanic origin? An answer to that question cannot be found in Rodó's *Ariel*.

<sup>8</sup> *Pocha culture* – a Spanish name for the superficial, utilitarian-oriented North American culture. This expression is probably derived from the *Yaqui* word *pochi* = "stupid"; however, its etymology may be more complicated.

<sup>9</sup> The term *hybrid culture* is promoted by the Argentine-Mexican social anthropologist Néstor García Canclini.

Peruvian writer and politician **Manuel González Prada (1848–1918)** prefigured in his essay *Our Indians* from 1904 (pp. 79-90) the beginnings of *indigenismo*, a movement striving for a respectable life of marginalized Indians. While Martí in "Our America" discerned more ethno-cultural substrates, González Prada strives to edify the original inhabitants of the continent. He is aware that half-breed *encastados*<sup>10</sup>, who outnumbered the previous majority, are the worst evil for Peruvian Indians. González Prada even more strongly than Martí refuses to work with the term *race*, which is for him, like for Novicow, "a subjective category of our mind without external reality" (p. 79). The Indian question lies in the socio-economic problem and "revolution": the only solution is to get rid of poverty and low-class position. "*Indians will be saved only by their own efforts, not by humanization of their oppressors*" (p. 90).

Writer and ethnologist **José María Arguedas (1911–1969)** put even stronger accent on the Indian element in Peruvian culture. In his essay *Cosmic loneliness in Kechua Poetry* (pp. 207-216), he particularly points out the growing contrast between the mountains and the shore caused by hundreds of years of isolation of Kechua villages inaccessible until the middle of the last century. Shortly after that, the Industrial Revolution started to penetrate the Peruvian Altiplano and the "cosmic loneliness" of

<sup>10</sup> The term *encastado* includes persons who are a mixture of white and Indian parents (*cholos* and *mestizos*), those who are a mixture of black and white parents (*mulatos*), and those who are a mixture of black and Indian parents (*zambos*).

its inhabitants started to fade out rapidly. Hundreds of thousands of Indians shifted immediately to the shore and settled in Lima, where they built hundreds of illegal peripheral quarters, so-called *pueblos juvenes*<sup>11</sup>, some of which have nowadays up to one million inhabitants. Peruvian Lima probably became the most rapidly growing city in the world.

An essay important for anthropology is the essay *The Process of Transculturation in Cuba* (pp. 115-120) by Cuban ethnologist, sociologist, historian, linguist, etc., **Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969)**. In it he presented the term *transculturation* that should have replaced the older term *aculturation*, first defined by North American cultural anthropologists R. Redfield, R. Linton and M. J. Herskovits in 1935<sup>12</sup>. In spite of more and more frequent use of the term aculturation, the term promoted by Ortiz – *transculturation* – sanctified by Bronislaw Malinowski seems to be more accurate. It does not have to be applied only to Cuba where according to Ortiz continental Indians, Jews, Portuguese, Anglo-Saxons, yellow Asians from Macao and other newcomers pass through double fateful events of destruction and renewal. At first, all of them go through the process of *deculturation* or *exculturation* followed by *aculturation* or *inculturation* and overarched by the synthesis of phenomena in *transculturation*. It is an incessant migration dynamic, social and cultural surf.

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<sup>11</sup> Literally *young villages* or *young cities*. Some of them arose overnight in pre-chosen sandy places.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. R. Redfield, R. Linton, M. J. Herskovits, A. Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation. In *Man*, 35, 1935, pp. 145-148.

Works of the Brazilian sociologist and anthropologist **Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987)** represent a deep anthropological insight into an archaic community of Brazilian sugar-cane plantation owners. This is in the first place exemplified in his extensive fresco *Casa-Grande e Senzala (Manorial House and Senzala)* from 1933. The essay *Borderlands and Plantations* (pp. 148-163), translated from a book called *Interpretation of Brazil* (in Spanish 1945), is an analysis of two different groups that took part in inhabiting Brazil – the so-called *vertical* (plantation owners) and *horizontal* founders. The former are early settled families, for whom firm stone and brick houses or *casas grandes*, large houses scattered all along the Atlantic coast, became a basic socio-economic cells. The latter are men with nomadic inclinations (“men of the borderland”) who dispersed to the north, south and west of the country and earned their living as traders with Indian and black slaves. Their mutual “symbiosis” led by pragmatism rather than by mutual affection between otherwise completely different groups lasted practically unchanged until 1888 when slavery was abolished in Brazil. However, the symbiosis is with some modifications visible even nowadays.

Venezuelan writer, university professor and politician **Arturo Uslar Pietri (1906–2001)** draws attention to the difficulties of looking for identity on the language level in his essay *No name World* (pp. 189-194). In the very beginning of his rather short contribution, he says: “*A name is a constituent of identity...*” (p. 189). He then illustrates the problems with identity by referring to the name for the “other

America.” While North Americans never had to hesitate over their name, no *pan-autoethnonym* exists to the south of Rio Grande. There are thus always hesitations if it is Spanish America, Hispanic America, Ibero-America, Latin America, Indo-America. Carlos Fuentes, a current Mexican writer, even tried to squeeze all the most important traditions in the name: “Indo-Afro-Ibero-America” to express as precisely as possible the polyculture nature of this cultural super-area. Pietri considers this hesitation over the name to be an important part of thinking about identity but even he cannot find any satisfactory “solution.”

When writing about categorizing of Latin America in his essay *Latin America: Long way to itself* (pp. 223-234), the great Mexican philosopher **Leopoldo Zea (1912–2004)** does not speak of assimilation, but of *juxtaposition* of various cultural forms caused by Iberian colonization. Various cultures forming Latin American identity have been placed next to each other, while one has always been leveled above the others. Zea believes that nowadays we can witness another attempt at a new juxtaposition imitating cultures of Western Europe – Anglo-Saxon and French. Like Mexican scholar Antonio Caso before him, Zea also warned against idle imitation, against the Latin American variant of *bovarism*, and exhorted his fellow countrymen to “think a bit.”

Another great Mexican poet and essayist **Octavio Paz (1914–1998)**, one of five Hispano-American laureates of the Nobel Prize in Literature, deals with the topic of double Mexico – *developed* and *developing* in his essay *The Critique of a Pyramid* (pp. 235-255). This is accord-

ing to him an essential problem, “*whose resolving is the key point of our national existence*” (p.235). By the *Developed Mexico* he means the part of the society that enforces its model of society on the other part – *Developing Mexico*. The former Mexico however does not realize that such a model is only a copy of a North American archetype leading to the attributes of the abovementioned “pocha culture” like wheat meals and leather boots replacing maize pancakes and *huarache*<sup>13</sup> that are much more comfortable in the given climatic conditions. When anthropologists study the developing Mexico, they use the term “culture of poverty” (O. Lewis). Paz argues against the term and stresses primarily the “otherness” of this predominantly poor and miserable Mexico. He identifies the main cause of a huge, lasting abyss in economic and social spheres of today’s Mexico<sup>14</sup> in both intentional and unintentional overlooking of otherness. At the same time, Paz criticizes the fact that Mexicans chose the Aztec as their archetype of the pre-Colonial Period. However Paz considers Aztec rather the predecessor of the Spanish conquistador and today’s politicians. In other words, a direct path leads from the Aztec *tlatoani* to the viceroy of New Spain and then to the president. All

<sup>13</sup> *Huarache* – Indian sandals formerly produced from cattle skin leather, today mostly produced industrially, e.g., from bald tires. Corn pancakes, *tortillas*, are still one of the main components of the Mexican diet despite a strong penetration of western cultural attributes.

<sup>14</sup> The Zapatista Movement mainly widespread in the South Mexican federal state of Chiapas is one of the results of these lacks of comprehension.

three are representatives of centralist and authoritative tradition, whose material and spiritual expression in the Central American is the pyramid.

The work and life of Paraguayan writer **Augusto Roa Bastos (1917–2005)** was influenced by the fact that his mother tongue was Guaraní. A bi-culture environment where he grew up and the troubles connected with the “trans-culturability” such as translating Guaraní expressions into Spanish are reflected in his socio-linguistic essay *Oral culture* (pp. 261-274). Paraguay, where both languages are equal, can thus be talked about as the only fully bilingual or better to say “di-lingual” country in the world.

Brazilian cultural anthropologist **Darcy Ribeiro (1922–1997)** was interested in Brazilian Indians, among whom he did a great deal of fieldwork. In the reviewed collection, his work is represented by the essay *The Afro-Brazil* (pp. 276-280). It is a minor ethnographic probe into the life of black people in Brazilian Society introduced there in accordance with its ecology – by monoculture and the slavery system.

The last author to be mentioned is Mexican novelist and essayist **Carlos Fuentes (born in 1928)**. Czech readers mainly know his novel “*Nejprůzračnější kraj*” [The Clearest Country], where he describes particular social classes of the capital city, and some other books translated into Czech. In the essay *Hispanic world of North America* (pp. 288-298), chosen for the volume from his book *The Buried Mirror*, he thinks about how Latin America would probably develop further on despite millions of its inhabitants escaping over the northern border,

which is for him a hardly healable wound. Fuentes is optimistic and he believes that Latin American culture is strong enough and that the “*enchilada* can stay next to hamburgers.” He speaks about the more positive side of acculturation or transculturation: “...*cultures prosper only in contact with other cultures; in isolation they become lazy*” (p. 294). Only this way, apparently, can the bleeding wound be healed. Thus, Fuentes is more conciliatory than many of his colleagues. He basically believes in the equal co-existence of both “other Americas.”

**In conclusion:** The anthology includes comprehensive notes, a selective general bibliography, and bibliography of the authors together with their short biographies. It is without hesitation a very useful handbook for all who are interested in a thorough study of “Hispano-American” and “Luso-American” cultural identity. It is a relatively representative volume covering most of the important countries or wider areas of Latin America – Mexico, the Caribbean area and above all South America. In the anthology I miss only representatives of Central American countries that also gave the world many excellent writers and thinkers (M. A. Asturias, A. Monterroso, R. Darío, R. H. Valle, etc.). However, they were rather novelists, poets, or philosophers and did not concentrate that much on writing essays. Nevertheless, I think that at least **Luis Cardoza y Aragón (1904–1992)**, a Guatemalan poet and reporter, and his essays *Guatemala, las líneas de su mano* (1955) are so important that they could have been included in the otherwise very well done anthology.

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**Peter Salner: MINULÝ ROK V JERUZALEME. [Last Year in Jerusalem.]**

Bratislava: Marenčin PT, 2010, 256 pp.

The new book by the Bratislava ethnologist Peter Salner, published in a beautiful format by Marenčin PT publishers in a Bratislava-Pressburg edition, follows up on Salner's previous title *Budúci rok v Bratislave alebo stretnutie (Next Year in Bratislava or a Meeting)* (Albert Marenčin PT 2007),<sup>1</sup> paraphrasing the blessing connected with the Jewish seder, which is, in its importance, comparable to Christmas Eve in the Christian tradition. Last year's title is dedicated to the already-300-member group aged between 55 and 70 years old, socially and religiously heterogeneous, centralized around the Internet forum *Meeting* (founded in 2004; in 2009 renamed *Light*) and one moderator, who also includes in the Web pages (in Slovak) information about happenings in Israel, interesting events, books, television and radio broadcasts, Slovak anti-Semitism. This forum connects Slovak Jews who emigrated after August 1968, mainly to North America, Israel and Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and the Slovak version of the *Czech Children of Maislovka*. Its original core (Bratislava Jews meeting in a Kitchen) gradually spread, however, to more Slovak and Czech Jews – descendants of victims of the Shoah with experience of the August occupation in 1968.

<sup>1</sup> A review of the book appeared in *Urban People*, 12, 2010, 2, pp. 445–446.

The book reflects (and not only in the text, but also by means of tens of authentic photographs) preparations for the meeting and the meeting itself of the group at the Dead Sea in Israel in 2008. However, it simultaneously recalls a previous meeting (the first and most emotional in Bratislava, 2005), in Košice, where today the second most numerous Jewish community in Slovakia lives (in 2006, more than 200 participants) and in the Low Tatras (Tále, 2007, 180 participants). This text was also constructed by Salner, primarily on an abundance of e-mails exchanged by the members of the group before and after the meeting and, further, interviews with them and the participant observation of the researcher and, at the same time, interested participant. Salner attempts to grasp the identity of the specific group, which is constantly developing.

If, in the past, Judaism was the pillar of Jewish society, today it is, as Salner and his informants correctly repeatedly emphasize, mainly the experience of the catastrophe to which the Jews give the Hebrew name Shoah. The primary aim of Salner's work, however, shows how the group gradually welded together (it became a family) and how it began to fill its social function (including complementing knowledge about relatives of their members). But as Salner convincingly showed in his analysis of the texts, the main topics on the Web pages are today cornerstones of the postmodern Jewish identity of *children of the Holocaust*. Beside the theme of the Shoah (including the constant investigation into the fate of murdered relatives, the monitoring of cultural documents with the

Shoah thematic, mainly, then, "reprises" of the journeys of Jewish children on the so-called Winton trains), there is Judaism (differently experienced primarily in the attitude toward Jewish holidays), worries about the fate of the state of Israel, which, also for non-Israeli Jews, fills a function of great significance (primarily potentially safe asylum) and lands of origin (Czechoslovakia, Slovakia). In relation to Slovakia, at the same time nostalgic memories of childhood and youth (entertainment, games, food, outstanding Jewish personalities) are mixed with negative experiences of life under the totalitarian regime, which continue reflections about the insufficient care of the synagogues and cemeteries in today's Slovakia. A wave of emotion was induced by the death of the popular singer Waldemar Matuška, who was perceived as an erstwhile idol of respondents and/or a symbol of their youth. The axis of the identity of this group is also, however, the experience of occupation and the subsequent emigration which is today perceived positively by those successful and cosmopolitan people. The erstwhile trauma was entirely overlaid by the experience of a better life in democratic states of the Western type compared to communist Czechoslovakia, better property security; in addition a feeling of difference from the Slovak surroundings lasts. The final pages of the book, then, zoomed in on the subjective experience of the meeting in Israel which, in 2008, celebrated the sixtieth year of its existence.

What to write in conclusion? Anyone who takes this book in his hand will immediately be attracted to the rivet-

ingly related story of one specific group, mediated mainly through its main language. A specialist, then, will value the highly interesting material about the problematics of the rise of group solidarity, social networks and also, of course, Jewish identity, however much he will regret that the book does not develop certain outlined theses into greater theoretical depth and breadth. However, Peter Salner does not write only for theoreticians of minorities but – primarily – for all who are interested in the history of Bratislava and the thinking of Slovak and Slovak-Jewish society. And the great reader success of his works proves that this strategy is, to a great extent, right.

*Blanka Soukupová*

**Helena Nosková, Eva Tošovská:  
KAPITOLY O PROMĚNÁCH  
POHRANIČÍ SE ZŘETELEM  
NA KRÁLICKO. [Chapters  
about Changes on the  
Borderland with Regard to  
Krállicko (the Králiky area).]**

Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR (Prague: Institute of Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic), v.v.i., 2010, 255 pp.

The new book by Helena Nosková, an ethnologist and historian, senior researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and her colleague Eva Tošovská, a lawyer and economist, came about in the framework of a project

of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, which is dedicated to the development of borderland regions. At the same time, however, it presents some sort of finalization of the long-term archival and field research of borderlands realized by Helena Nosková, one of our best field ethnographers and, simultaneously, one of the key workers of the former Institute for Ethnography and Folklore Studies of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. After her discharge from the Academy as a result of its badly thought-out restructuralization, Nosková was forced again to fight her way to scientific work through her position of high-school teacher. She never lost her love for the field of borderlands and, after 1989, she “discovered” a new microfield – the microregion of Krállicko. Despite the voices of the unenlightened, the borderland remained, after the so-called Velvet Revolution, an extremely interesting anthropological laboratory; at the same time, however, because of its complicated historical development (before 1947 it was an area with a Czech minority as a result of the postwar expulsion of the Czech Germans, with an interruption of continual development) and because of its peripheral position bringing economic vulnerability and cultural backwardness it remained the Achilles’ heel of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. The transition to market economics after 1989 could both worsen and reduce these handicaps.

The highly up-to-date work of both authors consists of a macro-analysis devoted to borderlands and a micro-analysis focused on the concrete micro-region of Krállicko. The first study by Helena

Nosková follows, in the first postwar years, year by year, waves of migration of Slovaks heading, from the beginning of the summer of 1945 until 1995, for the borderland. The chapter draws from a thorough knowledge of the main, regional and company archives and, of course, fieldwork. The arrival of Slovaks is rigidly connected to the development of so-called great history, which did not favor the existence of national minorities and is mainly connected to strategies of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. This strongest postwar political party logically favored poor Slovaks from Romania (so-called Slovak-Ore-Mountain Slovaks came, mainly in 1948-9), who promised political support over Slovaks from Austria, France, Belgium and overseas, but also Slovaks from Hungary. Nosková's critical text does not mask the dismal situation in the postwar borderland; new settlers did not manage to replace the resettled qualified German farmers. Important also is the author's assessment of the wave of Slovak migration from 1960 to 1989 and after the break-up of the federation (1992), when the flow of Slovaks again increased. As a result of this increase, minority associations were again activated. In the chapter on the diversity and frequent migrations of the Slovaks, Nosková brought up the thesis that the Slovak minority in the Czech Lands, as a result of their historic development, did not create united Slovakness. In her second chapter, then, the author concentrated on circumstances (including consideration of the Czechoslovak government in exile and Slovak exile politicians, opponents of Czechoslovakness (or, to use Nosková's

terminology, Czechoslovakism) and the character of re-emigration of the most numerous Slovak group – compatriots from Romania, mainly from the Transylvanian Slovak Ore Mountains, colonists from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries who were originally to be settled in Slovakia. The re-emigration of Czechs and Slovaks from Yugoslavia, on the contrary, ran into the interests of the Soviet Union and communist Yugoslavia. Nosková supplements the second chapter in the third study with an analysis of memories of their own history of the Slovaks from Transylvania, of circumstances of settling the borderland and of the changes of the annual folk-ritual cycle, to which were also projected Romanian influences. One can only regret that the author did not devote even greater attention to the communication situations arising among the minorities around their ceremonies and traditions. On the other hand, however, this very chapter whose most important ascertainment I consider the thesis about the agreement among historical sources and oral folk tradition shows best Helena Nosková's exemplary approach to the informants. In a simplified way, it can be characterized in three words: unpretended interest and respect. This respect for others, without regard to their current social situation, was probably best applied by Claude Lévy-Strauss, the French researcher with Jewish roots. A series of indicators (marriage rate, rise of socio-professional status in the generation of grandchildren), with which anthropologists have worked, testify, besides, to the fact that social and educational handicaps can be relatively quickly overcome.

In the fourth chapter Nosková focused on the topic of Slovaks from Hungary in the borderland. This particular group had already relocated there at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and, after 1918, it became a striking minority of 200,000 to 400,000 compatriots. After 1945 it was to replace the Hungarian minority of southern Slovakia. The difficulties of Czechoslovak-Hungarian discussions, however, brought about the relocation of only part of the Hungarian Slovaks. Their position in Czech society (there were more than 20,000 people) was, however, unsatisfactory for a long time. As Nosková correctly states, the Protestant Slovak minority from Hungary also felt that the interest of the politicians and human destiny were, as a rule, at variance.

This macro-analysis is supplemented by an analysis of one concrete micro-region. Eva Tošovská followed, on the basis of extracts of data from the city chronicles of the town of Králiky, the development of the economic situation in Králicko from the 1890s until the period after the Velvet Revolution. She came to the conclusion that the area is lacking in sufficient education; on the other hand, however, this population is young and active. This is a region of little-disturbed nature. Helena Nosková, who concentrated on the historic connection of the colonization of Králicko from 1945 to 1960, including the problematics (until 1947) of Czechoslovak-Polish relations, also takes into account the fact that the present is, to a certain extent, anchored in the past. But what is most valuable is Nosková's analysis of colonization (Králicko was not to be fully colonized

and in 1954 it was transferred to the category of the so-called non-preferred borderland). In the closing chapter, then, the main editor summarized, inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, the development and contemporary state of the so-called cultural and social capital (a complex of social connections, righteousness and seriousness) in the micro-region. Doing so, she focused on modern times up to the present. She took into account both the capital of the original German population and the capital of individual minorities who completed the settlement of the border area after the Second World War. She also came to the thesis, even if, for the present, only on the basis of a first outline, that the majority the population still lacks that cultural capital, and therefore Králicko is less resilient in its reactions to economic changes and turbulence.

In conclusion, I can only repeat that the book by Helena Nosková and Eva Tošovská presents an exceptionally rich work which can become one of the cornerstones of a large monograph about the border areas of the Czech Lands and of theoretical considerations of the topic of center and periphery, majority and minority.

*Blanka Soukupová*

**René Petráš (ed.): AKTUÁLNÍ PROBLÉMY PRÁVNÍHO POSTAVENÍ MENŠIN V ČESKÉ REPUBLICE. [Current Problems of the legal status of Minorities in the Czech Republic.] Collection of papers from the seminar on Minorities and the Law in the Czech Republic, Prague 2010.**

Prague/ Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2010, 121 pp.

This reviewed book consists of seven studies written by six leading experts – graduates of law and history faculties and one ethnologist. The editorial work this time also fell to the young lawyer and historian René Petráš, a researcher at the Institute of Legal History of Charles University who worked his way up to being the leading expert in the history of the legal status of national minorities in the Czech Lands in the past century. Petráš also wrote the introductory study in which he emphasized the non-existence of a legal definition of the key term of minority, mainly *national minority*.

Instead of an explanation of minority as a handicapped group vis-à-vis the dominating position of the majority population he used the main delimitation of a minority by language. At the same time he revived the definition of minority given by the World Court in 1930 where, according to this institution, an important sign of a minority became the will of the intergenerational transmission of identity.

Petráš is entirely right, then, to point out an important aspect of international

policy in relation to minorities (this problem, by the way, was experienced by Czechoslovakia in connection with the internationalization of the so-called Sudeten-German question in the 1930s) and the difference between autochthonous (historical) and allochthonous (immigrant) minorities. He divided *Contemporary minority problems* themselves into legal problems, problems connected with differences of the minority, historical problems and problems developed by chauvinism and racism (there is, however, the question of whether the last aspect is not present in the first two and in the fourth situations). As a lawyer, however, the author dealt mainly with peculiarities in the approach to the minority from the point of view of the law as a universal and traditionalistic phenomenon. Czechoslovak postwar law was connected to state attempts at liquidating the non-Slavic minorities. In 1968 a new special constitutional law was passed, but interest in minorities returned only at the time of the revolution in 1989. Reflections of the situation in domestic legal science are still far from the ideal state. Czech legal science today does not have an established bibliographic database; it wrestles with the unavailability of a series of quality work published (but not by prestigious publishing houses), with insufficient access to foreign literature and with the non-existence of a coordinating center of research.

Helena Petrův, Petráš's colleague at the Faculty of Law, attached to the introductory paper information about the contemporary status of national minorities in the Czech Republic defined by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and

Freedoms. She differs national minority (a person becomes a member of it on the basis of his own decision) and ethnic minority as an objective category. Not until 2001 was there a law about the rights of members of national minorities. In this case also, however, the law works with the dichotomy of national and ethnic minorities, while autochthonous minorities are legally advantaged. The law understands a national minority as a group of citizens of the Czech Republic living on the land of the current Czech Republic, a group that strives for the preservation and reproduction of its own identity. As an appropriate inspiration for the modification of this law Petrův sees the Hungarian legal system, in which minority rights are connected with minority obligations.

Andrej Sulitka, long-time head of the workers' secretariat of the Council of the Government for National Minorities, presented preparations of the so-called minority law, a reaction of the minority and the state administration to its adoption. He himself saw the main problem in the contemporary model of public administration, concretely in the impossibility of influencing the decisions of the district and the city. Andrea Baršová of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic attempted to outline the historical relations between state citizenship and the position of national minorities in Austria, in the monarchy, in the First Republic and after the war. She tried to prove that historical intellectual patterns endured to the present, concretely that the institute of state citizenship served to prefer Czechs and Slavs.

The last two empirical papers were devoted to specific problems of two

minorities. Jan Kuklík, the director of the Institute of Legal History of the Faculty of Law of Charles University, described the development of legislation in relation to the restitution of Aryanized and postwar nationalized property of Jewish fellow-citizens. It was only in the spring of 1992 that there was a breakthrough of restitution limits which were identified with the February coup d'état. In 1994, after protests of the Jewish representation, the condition of permanent residency of the restituent in the Czech Republic was withdrawn. The real turning point, however, was brought by the law of June 23, 2000, concerning the reduction of some property injustices incurred by the Holocaust. This law enabled restitution to be brought to a close. The example of property restitution just mentioned showed how strong the influence of the foreign policy situation can have on the position of the minority.

In the last text Harald Christian Scheu, a specialist in the defense of human rights and basic freedoms, and Wolfgang Wieshaider of the University of Vienna, pointed out the lapse of the Austrian Supreme Court in the case of a law about the wearing of a niqab in a courtroom of a Muslim woman accused of terrorism in March 2008. According to both specialists, in the case of any doubts about of religious expression, religious freedom should be superior to criminal law.

In conclusion it is perhaps possible to state that the contemporary permeability of the world creates ideal conditions for the rise of new minorities and/or for the activation of old minorities. One can consider this reviewed book to be highly

timely. However, currently in the environment of social scientists it would be read as a stimulus for close cooperation with lawyers and legal historians who offer us necessary aspects of the cohabitation of majorities and minorities.

*Blanka Soukupová*

**Oldřich Tůma a Tomáš Vilímek (Eds.): OPOZICE A SPOLEČNOST PO ROCE 1948. ČESKÁ SPOLEČNOST PO ROCE 1945. [Opposition and Society after 1948. Czech Society after 1945], vol. 6.**

Prague: Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic v. v. i., 2009, 224 pp.

The sixth volume in the series *Czech Society after 1945* presents four good quality empirically founded studies dedicated to burning questions of Czech society after the February Revolution of 1948. The first study by Květa Jechová is the result of a long-term project about Czech and Slovak women at the time of so-called real socialism. The author's basic premise is that the history of the emancipation of women presents the possibility of looking into the history of the entire society. However Jechová, accepting the optic of gender, as one of the first researchers (unfortunately it is still true that writing of the historiography of women is, to a great extent, the domain of women<sup>1</sup>) opened up in her text not

only the question of the relations of society to maternity, including its reaction to decreasing childbirth in the 1960s and the problematics of maternity leave, but also the highly sensitive (and therefore discussed in every regime) question of birth control and abortion. One can only regret that her study did not allow voices to be heard of those who actually experienced wanted and unwanted maternity. Jechová depended mainly on the analysis of sources of women's institutions of the time, Communist Party committees, legislation of the time discussed in the press and samizdat publications, and of sociological research of the State Commission on Population. On the basis of these fundamental sources she was able to outline the history of women's emancipation based on the indicator of reproduction. Furthermore, she analyzed the development of state population policies and, finally, she also destroyed the popular myth about the so-called Husák children. In a sensitive analysis, the apparent success of the normalization of the regime appears as a result of the fact that strong postwar generations came into their reproductive years as well as the consequence of the resonance of the reforms of the '60s, in which the model of state support for families with children was worked on, a model that completely, in an unplanned way, served to establish normalization. However, Jechová also refuted the myth of the mechanical connection between the employment of women and the drop in the number of children. At the same time she pointed

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maternity, employment and public activity of women by which Jechová was inspired..

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also the survey of basic work about

out the discussion about the profitability of women's employment. To these problematics she organically connected the development of abortion legislation (including the insufficient use of modern birth control in the Czech society) with key changes in 1950; abortion was legalized for health reasons), in 1957 (abortion could be performed for other reasons than health reasons; criminalization for abortions was abolished and abortion committees were established), and in 1986 (the right to an abortion became a women's right; the abortion committees were abolished as ineffective and professionally and ethically questionable institutions). As one of the first, Jechová called attention to so-called unwanted children, unloved children. The repeatedly quoted statement of the Canadian sociologist Alena Heitlinger can be very surprising: that education for parenthood in Czechoslovakia at the time of normalization was more open, more specialized and more systematic than in Western states. It would be worth exploring this thesis, however, in connection with the little influence of churches in modern Czech society.

The second study of political history was done by Zdeněk Kárník. In it, the well-known historian clarified the circumstances and echoes of the "merging" conference of the left-wing of the Social Democrats four months after the February Revolution of 1948. Kárník focused on the motives for merging, the relation of the Communists to the former Social Democrats (mistrust even touched Zdeněk Fierlinger, who himself was one of the most determined initiators of the coalition) and in the varied two-

hundred-thousand member group of the "unmerged," part of whom established the party in exile. Those who remained home were persecuted by the state security, which was also interested in emigrants. Some of the unmerged Social Democrats actually developed illegal activity although, however, there were no conditions for their persecution in the framework of a trumped-up mass trial.

While Kárník used archival material and correspondence of Social Democrats, Milan Otáhal attempted to interpret 33 oral-history interviews with workers who experienced normalization. Interviews, realized in the framework of Miroslav Vaněk's project concerning Czech society during normalization through the optic of intelligence and of representatives of workers' professions, turned around their experiences of political and public events of the 1960s, mainly the occupation, the Velvet Revolution, listening to Western radio during normalization and the relations of this group toward socialism, the regime, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, trade unions, formal elections, political celebrations and socialist medals and toward the opposition movement. Otáhal's interpretation confirmed that workers represented a heterogeneous group which, however, as a whole, carved out interest in public events (an exception was presented by the positive acceptance of the revival process and shock over the occupation) and it was interested mainly in its own standard of living and social securities (from here disappointment with the developments after 1989 emerged). Therefore holidays organized by the trade unions and supposedly

better relations among people during normalization earned positive appraisal. In contrast to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, however, the unions had great prestige among workers. An ambivalent position, then, was taken by people in relation to the May Day celebration, but they had a rather positive relation to celebration of International Women's Day and to decorations for workers' performance. In general it is possible to state that the absence of civic freedom bothered people less than the consequences of the clumsy socialist economy. Otáhal's text enables us to understand better the mentality of the people after 1989; although he does not work with the older mentality of the bearers of workers' professions, the picture of the worker as a conscious Social Democrat striving for his own rights is probably only an untrue myth (being in politics was always the privilege of worker leaders); he notices only insufficiently the family basics of the informants and he does not differ between men's and women's views.

The collection concludes with a study by Tomáš Vilímek of the relations between Czech society and the opposition that governing organs successfully separated from the majority of society. The author, who most persistently followed the task given by the title of the volume, stated that most people strove for a satisfactory life and for the construction of family welfare which they did not want to threaten with opposition activity. A mutual agreement with the regime was then confirmed by a series of rituals; however research of public opinion and other sources – despite its discussibility – signalized the grow-

ing dissatisfaction of the people with the regime. An analysis of the Charta (Charter) documents, then, showed its connection with social problems, but also the fear of some of the Chartists of the ghettoization of their group. The relation of society to Charta was characterized by alleged interest, hidden sympathy, fear and lack of understanding, a minimum of knowledge. It would, however, be interesting to compare this scale of Czech attitudes with the attitudes of other national societies toward their own opposition; mainly, however, it should be attitudes anchored in the family, children of a family of a pragmatic party leader and/or of a family affected by the regime.

In conclusion it is possible to state that the four studies presented here, however connected to a rather inconsistent whole, offer a desirably critical view of Czech society after 1945. Thus, undoubtedly there can be important building stones for a large future monograph about postwar Czech society and perhaps also a monograph comparing the development in various states of the Soviet blok. It is actually evident that the circumstances of the creation of opposition and its acceptance for the most part have their roots in the processes of the formation of modern nations.

*Blanka Soukupová*

## JOURNAL OF URBAN CULTURE RESEARCH 1, 2010

Published by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.  
214 pp.

A new journal of urban anthropology has been published, generously designed in content and appearance (large format: A4). If you looked for its publisher among American or (Western) European universities, you would be mistaken. It is published by a university in Thailand – Bangkok – in cooperation with Osaka City University. Its editor-in-chief is Kjell Skyllstad, professor of musicology in Oslo, Norway; on its editorial board are scientists from Thailand, Australia, Vietnam, Slovenia, the USA and Japan. According to its editorial, *(the) emphasis on the relationships between the arts and urban cultures is the main focus of the journal*. The composition of the editorial board corresponds to this broad view: on it are ethnomusicologists, specialists in fashion design, choreography, art history and urban studies.

If someone is surprised at the publication of an urban journal in Thailand, Kjell Skyllstad immediately explains in the editorial: *Asia has more than a half of the world's largest cities, including 10 megacities... Southeast Asia is steadily urbanizing... This rapid process of urbanization is accompanied by equally rapid cultural changes affecting all aspects of life (which are perceived very often negatively)... So acknowledging these negative consequences of rapid urban growth, why do city planners not come with programs for sustainable development that*

*would also promote cultural continuity? The answer is that cities and towns in the region are largely self-organizing instead of planned.* (p. 6) This self-destructive situation is, to a certain extent, related to the issue of grave environmental degradation... *these problems have motivated and propelled a movement to implement intra- and interdepartmental city planning initiatives... in this vision, cultural workers and institutions, artists and art educators have a definite role to play.* (p. 7)

From the above statement, it is clear that the journal is intended mainly as a platform for applied science and/or interdisciplinary discussion.

The topic of this first volume (one volume is expected to be published yearly) is broadly formulated: *The Art of Development: Exploring the Role of Culture and the Arts in Sustainable Community Development and Social Transformation*. Within its framework are six thematic spheres which differ both by their representation and by the character of the contributions. The first thematic sphere – *Sharing Arts across the Continents: Art, Dialogue and Development in the Time of HM King Chulalongkorn* – contains only one historical-musicological paper – by Philippe de Lustrac of France about the Siamese composer living in Paris, Eugène Cinda Grassi. The second sphere – *Developing Creativity – Theoretical Discourses* – is also represented by just one paper: “Shaping a Creative Milieu.” Here, Tom Borrup (USA), using as an example two art schools, identifies ten characteristics found to be common in the formation of a creative milieu.

On the contrary, the next two spheres contain numerous papers. *The Art of*

*Development – The Development of Art* includes a report on the vast Norwegian-Thai project *Transposition* (Geir Johnson, Norway); “The Progression of Art in Bangkok’s Public Spaces” (Kamol Phaosavasdi, Thailand) discusses the developmental process of art projects in Bangkok; Thanh To Nhoc (Vietnam) describes the situation of “Traditional Folk Arts in Conditions of Recent Society.”

*Arts and Transformations – Models of Art Outreach Program for Individual and Social Rehabilitation and Development* includes two comparative case studies – “Dance House: European Models of Folk Music and Dance Revival in Urban Settings” (a comparison of Hungarian and Slovenian phenomena of “Dance Houses”) by Svanibor Pettan (Slovenia) and also a comparison of programs for persons with disabilities in Thailand, Canada and the USA by Frances Anderson (USA). The sphere is supplemented by a reflective essay by the British Dan Baron Cohen now living and working in Brazil, “Dialogic Performance: Toward a Pedagogy of Transformance.”

The next sphere – *Music and Well-being in the City – Developing Urban Health Care in Asia* – contains two case studies: “Beyond Entertainment: Music

and Health Care in Urban Parks” by Busakorn Binson (Thailand) derived from Thai material and “Community Music Therapy in Action: Healing Through *Pirit* Chanting in Sri Lanka” by Lasanti M. Kalinga Dona (Sri Lanka), in which the author describes the history and contemporary function of *pirit*, an important public Buddhist ceremony.

Victoria Vorreiter (USA), the only author in the last sphere, *Art and Survival – Our Endangered Cultures*, reports in her rather nostalgic text “Vanishing Echoes” about her attempts to record mainly intangible cultural elements of small communities in Southeastern Asia.

In addition to information about several research projects, mainly in Japan, there are a few conference reports. The most impressive of them is from the Singapore World City Summit (June 2010); its main topic is the rebirth of Bilbao, the basis of which is the establishment of the Guggenheim Museum in the center. At the Singapore summit, Bilbao was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize. Thus Bilbao is an example of successful intervention of art in a city. The Journal of Urban Culture Research attempts to be one of the voices helping similarly successful interventions.

*Zuzana Jurková*