

## **The Ostrava city branch of the Association for Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship from 1968 to 1989: Merely a tool of the normalization-era regime?**

Martin Juřica

The Association for Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship (Svaz československo-sovětského přátelství) was founded in 1948. It followed in the footsteps of an organization established in the 1920s with the aim of supporting contacts between Czechoslovakia and the USSR. After the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the association became a target for anti-Soviet protests. However, it soon managed to resume its activities. Its purpose during the period of “normalization” (the policy introduced by the hardline pro-Soviet regime installed after the invasion) and up to the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 was to continue informing the public about all aspects of life in the Soviet Union. However, direct indoctrination was sidelined in favour of “softer” forms of promotion, including cultural events, presentations of Russian and Soviet culture, and tourist excursions to the USSR. By becoming members of the association, people could improve their “cadre profile” (a rating of their political acceptability); this even applied to those who had been expelled from the Czechoslovak Communist Party during the 1970 purges. The demise of the association following the collapse of the communist regime in November 1989 attracted minimal public attention.

## **“Restoration of order” – the events of August 1969 in Ostrava**

Lukáš Vaculík

This study analyzes the events that occurred in Ostrava on the first anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia which crushed the so-called Prague Spring. Protests, strikes and other forms of opposition were less prominent in Ostrava than in other regional centres; however, it is still important to carry out a detailed historical analysis of the last remnants of the Prague Spring’s civil resistance in this major regional city. The study does not merely describe the events of August 1969; it also traces the first phase in the process of “normalization” that followed the invasion, both on a regional and a national level. It describes the mobilization of the state apparatus, the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the security services against expected civil unrest, as well as tracing the course of the events and assessing their consequences. The study also includes a comparison between the 1969 protests and other similarly prominent demonstrations elsewhere in the Eastern bloc. The author concludes with a brief overview of how the events of the Prague Spring were reflected by

Czech historiographers and journalists following the collapse of the communist regime in 1989.

### **The sculptor Vladislav Gajda and his work for Ostrava's Technical University**

Jakub Ivánek, Eva Špačková

From the late 1960s onwards, the Ostrava sculptor Vladislav Gajda (1925–2010) created several works for Ostrava's Technical University (VŠB); these works still serve as visual symbols of the university today. This ensemble of works created for a university by a leading local sculptor offers an inspirational example of how art can still play a role in the life of a higher educational institution. This study presents Gajda's most important works for the university (the outdoor relief *Prometheus* above the main entrance to the university's Rectorate – including the often-forgotten part of the work situated inside the building – and the indoor relief *Coal and Iron*, made of blasted sandstone from Hořice in Bohemia), situating them within the context of Gajda's oeuvre as a whole and assessing his sources of inspiration. The paper also focuses on Gajda's occasional production of medals; the only remaining traces of this aspect of the sculptor's work are found in archive materials and as part of his posthumous estate. The study reveals links between Gajda's monumental work and his medals, demonstrating how he created sculptural representations of science and technology on widely different scales and using various materials.

### **The photography of František Krasl**

Ondřej Durczak

The end of 2018 will mark twenty years since the death of one of the region's most distinctive photographers known for his contribution to official promotional materials – František Krasl (1912–1998). This paper explores selected aspects of Krasl's photographic oeuvre, which stretched over more than six decades; the main focus is on his industrial photography and mountain landscapes. These represented the creative core of Krasl's work; selected photographs – both from his publications and from individual exhibitions of his works – are analyzed primarily in terms of their visual aesthetics. The paper deliberately does not address the photography which represented the main source of Krasl's income, particularly his work for the former State Theatre in Opava.

### **The search for important historical figures in Ostrava's cemeteries**

Petr Kašing

This article represents a loose continuation of an already published paper entitled *Important historical figures and their burial sites at the central cemetery in Slezská Ostrava* (Ostrava 31, 2017). This published paper attracted considerable interest, so the author decided to continue in this line of research, mapping the final resting places of important historical figures at around twenty cemeteries in Ostrava. The paper presents 70 interesting figures with a connection to Ostrava and the city's history. The author's aim was not only to write about figures who are still well-known in Ostrava today, but also to commemorate important figures who have been largely forgotten for many years. Readers will learn about actors, directors, musicians, artists, writers, doctors, athletes, academics, and people from many other walks of life. Each figure is commemorated with a brief biographical note, references to other literature, and details of the place of burial.

### **The Society for Natural Sciences in Ostrava and its importance for science and the development of museums in the Ostrava region**

Antonín Barcuch

This paper focuses on the activities of the Society for Natural Sciences in Ostrava. Founded in 1908, the society played an important role in instigating and organizing scientific activity in the Ostrava region, as well as making a major contribution to public awareness of science reaching across wide sections of the population. The society instigated the establishment of a science department at Ostrava's municipal museum and was responsible for procuring the oldest items in the museum's geological, zoological, botanical and entomological collections. Important aspects of the society's work popularizing science among the general public included lectures, excursions, film screenings, the publication of scientific papers, the establishment of a meteorological station, and astronomic observations. The paper also focuses on several important figures who worked for or collaborated with the society, including university academics from Prague, Brno, Olomouc, Bratislava and elsewhere.

### **The Germanization of the Moravská Ostrava municipal government during the Nazi occupation**

Jozef Šerka

One of the Nazis' main priorities during their occupation of Bohemia and Moravia was to gain control over municipal government bodies. In Moravská Ostrava this process was launched in March 1939, when Josef Hinner was appointed mayor (and later government commissar). However, at the beginning of 1940 he was dismissed from his post due to his

lenient attitude towards the Czech population. He was replaced by the staunch Nazi and SS officer Emil Beier, who by the end of 1942 had removed Czech employees from practically all management positions within local government. Some of them were forced into early retirement, while others were demoted as a result of a wide-ranging reorganization. Czechs were left with minimal influence over local government affairs. There was also discrimination against Czechs in the recruitment processes, leading to a rapid increase in the number of German local government employees; due to the ongoing war, most of these were women. German became the sole official language in 1940, and throughout the war the majority of Czech officials were unable to gain promotion due to their insufficient knowledge of the language; many of them also saw their salaries cut. German former employees who had been dismissed after Czechoslovakia's independence in 1918 due to their insufficient knowledge of the Czech language received compensation. As part of this Germanization process, the legal entity of Moravská Ostrava was also transferred under the jurisdiction of German courts.

### **The outstanding products of the Vítkovice Ironworks' bridge plant in the era of the Czechoslovak Republic**

Radomír Sed'a

From the mid-19th century onwards, steel structures ranked among the core products of the Vítkovice Ironworks. Starting out with a small-scale workshop, over the course of several decades the company gradually built up a forward-looking and widely renowned production unit which was capable of responding flexibly to changing market demand and competing with powerful international rivals. Taking six supply contracts as examples, the paper demonstrates not only the high technical standards achieved by the Vítkovice designers and assembly teams, but also the skill of the negotiators at the company's sales division. The contracts pertained to a city hall tower, a Catholic church, a residential block including premises for cultural and social events, and three bridges. All these structures are outstanding in some way – either in their size, the materials used, or the originality of their design. The structures – built both in Czechoslovakia and abroad – are rightly considered examples of the “family silver” of the Vítkovice Ironworks' bridge plant.

### **Religious topics in workers' amateur dramatics in the Ostrava region (1895–1938)**

Agáta Kravčíková

Compared with other topics addressed by workers' amateur dramatic groups forming part of socialist organizations, religion (whether depicted in a positive or negative light) generally

played a relatively marginal role. Nevertheless, in the Ostrava region – the centre of the atheist movement in Czechoslovakia between the world wars – religion was viewed a relevant topic for purposes of atheistic and anti-clerical propaganda. Previous research of amateur dramatic productions has indicated that theatre did not serve as a primary channel for disseminating atheist and anti-clerical ideology. In this context, Bedřich Čurda-Lipovský represents a highly distinctive figure in the Ostrava region's inter-war cultural and social life; he played an active role in the social democratic and atheist movements as well as on the amateur dramatic scene.

### **125 years of history: the story of house no. 856 on Stodolní Street in Moravská Ostrava and its surroundings**

Jan Galeta

House no. 856 in Moravská Ostrava was built in 1891–1892. It was one of the first buildings from this era to be situated on Stodolní Street. It is a structure in the neo-Renaissance style on two floors; it was built for Rudolf Koch by the Ferdinand Hawlik company, with a later extension which was used initially as a restaurant and later as retail premises. In 2003 this extension was replaced by a new structure – designed by the architect Aleš Student – which once more houses a restaurant. The original owner of the building, Rudolf Koch, was a garden and park designer who was active in the late 19th and early 20th century. Originally employed by the prominent local Zwierzina family of mine-owners, he was a member of Ostrava's elite social circles. He planned the building as an investment, and never lived there himself. In 1900 the building contained 14 apartments with an average area of 32 m<sup>2</sup>, and it was home to 74 people as well as containing a convenience store. The article includes a number of brief historical accounts revealing the stories of people who lived in the building.

### **The establishment and activities of the First Austrian Soda Factory in Hrušov (1851–1911)**

Jan Gromnica

This study traces the early years of a (no longer existing) chemical factory founded in the Ostrava district of Hrušov in 1851 as the First Austrian Soda Factory. It focuses on the company's two founders, presents a previously unpublished account of the circumstances surrounding its foundation, and gives details of the factory's operations while still run by its original founders – including the production technologies used, social issues connected with

the factory's employees, and working conditions at the Hrušov plant. The study also presents the results of an analysis of the oldest employee records and other documentation.

### **Archeological evidence of literacy among the medieval population of Moravská Ostrava**

Zbyněk Moravec

Archeological surveys have uncovered several items documenting literacy among the medieval population of Ostrava: styluses, metal devices used in bookbinding, tiles and pottery items bearing inscriptions, and small items of everyday use (e.g. a ring and a small key evidently used for a cabinet or cupboard). The items were found in the vicinity of the Church of St Wenceslas (a stylus and metal book-binding devices); at the site of a rectory and a school (a stylus, tiles, a vessel with an inscription); in Ostrava's central square (a stylus, tiles); and on the former site of buildings (a ring, tiles). These finds are not extensive, but they do nevertheless indicate – in accordance with the findings of historical research – that literacy among Ostrava's citizens became more prevalent from the 15th century onwards. During the following century the percentage of the population who were literate evidently continued to rise, as indicated by the example of the rope-maker's wife who read from heretical books on the outskirts of the city.

### **The lease of the Moravská Ostrava distillery in 1786**

Jaroslava Novotná, Eva Rohlová

This paper includes a Czech translation of a contract (written in German) for the lease of a distillery, concluded between the city of Moravská Ostrava and the Jewish businessman Abraham Hošek on 4 July 1786 (document no. 1). A record of the contract also exists as an entry in a legal book compiled for the reeve's office and covering the period 1696–1787 (document no. 2). The lease was concluded for a three-year period, with rent of 1290 Rhine gulden payable annually. The distilling rights also applied to three other outlying communities that were subject to Moravská Ostrava: Přívoz, Lhotka and Nová Ves. The leaseholder had the right to sell spirits at reasonable prices, and in the case of disruptions to public order he was to be provided with assistance by the local court authorities. The importance of the contract is underlined by the presence of high-ranking representatives of the city, the Hungarian noblemen Lieutenant Pálffy and Lieutenant Gabany, and Martin von Kühlenz, a pioneering figure in the local coal-mining industry and the head of the mining authority.