

## **Ostrava in the eve of November events in 1989**

Martin Juřica

In Ostrava, 1989 unfolded much like any other year of that decade up until the revolutionary events of November. Despite economic problems, the city's large industrial corporations kept up more or less the same levels of production as in the previous year. A new development came in the form of elections for factory managers in the state-owned corporations. There were no improvements in the environmental situation. Cultural life underwent a very cautious process of liberalization, though public debate on fundamental political and social issues was still not possible. Attempts by Ostrava's small dissident community to organize protest meetings in August and October were suppressed in their embryonic stages. Despite the Czechoslovak Communist Party's declarations of "democratization" and "perestroika", its regional organizations lacked a reformist wing, and the party continued its attempts to control all areas of public life – though these attempts were no longer an unqualified success. Society as a whole remained passive until the second half of November 1989, when the majority of Ostrava's people joined the protests against the regime.

## **Delicious taste of chocolate and captivating perfume fragrances in Ostrava packing. Story of two factories and their Jewish owners**

Šárka Glombíčková, Jaroslava Novotná

The Jewish protagonists of this story originated in various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Isidor Zuckermann was born in Krakow, in Galicia; Jindřich Silbermann came from the Silesian town of Skoczów; and Otto Brüll (who would become Silbermann's business partner) was a native of Prague. At the beginning of the 20th century all three came to Ostrava, drawn by the vision of a more lucrative business environment. In the favourable conditions offered by the newly independent Czechoslovak Republic, they worked their way up to become the owners of medium-sized businesses employing several hundred people. The two factories – Silbermann & Brüll (which made perfumes, soaps and cardboard containers) and Zett (owned by Isidor Zuckermann, making chocolate and candy) – were located directly next to each other. The Nazi occupation and the outbreak of the Second World War brought an end to both businesses; the factories were Aryanized and their owners became the victims of anti-Jewish persecution. After the end of the war, the survivors attempted to reclaim their confiscated property. However, their efforts were permanently thwarted by the communist takeover in February 1948.

## **On conception and definition of Ostrava region**

Jiří Kovář, Petra Linhartová, Jan Sucháček

Few parts of the Czech Republic have a greater number of possible territorial delineations than the Ostrava region (Ostravsko). The situation is further complicated by differing quantitative and qualitative approaches to the issue. This study sets out to collate and classify various different concepts and delineations of the Ostrava region, and then to analyze and assess them. The text takes a primarily retrospective view. The topic is covered from a broad range of perspectives, encompassing factors related to language, physical geography, political geography, and the current position of the Ostrava region within the context of the Czech Republic.

## **Important visits of Vítkovice Ironworks**

Radomír Sed'a

During the second half of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, the Vítkovice ironworks ranked among the foremost metallurgical and engineering companies in what is now the Czech Republic. Vítkovice's economic importance and unique product portfolio attracted the attention of leading political and ecclesiastical figures, both nationally and on the international stage. The company was visited twice by the Habsburg Emperor, as well as by both Presidents of the inter-war First Czechoslovak Republic, numerous representatives of the communist regime, and two Presidents of the Czech Republic. Regardless of the differing social, political and economic circumstances in which these visits took place, they were all motivated by an interest in the Vítkovice company. Another shared feature of all these visits was the preparation of a suitably grand reception for the visiting dignitaries – involving not only the company management, but also rank-and-file employees and the general public. In some cases the preparation of public spaces lasted several days.

## **Social democratic 1st May celebrations and their perception by local Ostrava elites**

Agáta Kravčíková

Initially, May Day celebrations in the Ostrava region took place under the close supervision of the authorities, in private function rooms at inns on the outskirts of the city, and it was very rare for the participants' employers to grant them a day off for this purpose. However, by the 1930s May Day parades regularly marched through Ostrava's city centre, and the majority of labourers took a day off work without incurring any penalties from their employers. Sources originating from the activities of the official authorities during the period in question open up an entirely different perspective on the development of these celebrations of the international proletariat, which can be presented as a process involving the gradual consolidation of various social classes and political orientations within a single industrial city.

## **The United Administration Office. The attempt of partial administrative connection of Ostrava and Těšín regions in 1918–1919**

Jozef Šerka

The United Administration Office (Úřad spojené správy) was formally established on the basis of a government order of 18 December 1918 by leading political figures in the Ostrava region, headed by the social democrat Jan Prokeš. His task was to create a joint administration covering the industrial communities of the Ostrava-Karviná coalfield; this was evidently viewed (at least partially) as a preparation for the creation of the so-called Greater Ostrava administrative unit (merging Moravská Ostrava with a further 14 municipalities and towns in Moravia and Silesia). The territory to be covered by the United Administration Office was a complex ethnic patchwork including very large Polish and German communities, and the Office was to be established at a time when conflict was flaring up between Czechoslovakia and Poland over control of the historic territory of the Těšín region. For this reason, the creation of the Office was interpreted as a way of demonstrating that the municipalities within this region desired to be part of the Czechoslovak Republic. However, the plans to create the office never actually came to fruition – not only due to the so-called seven-day war and the subsequent preparations for a plebiscite in Těšín Silesia, but also due to the demands of left-wing parties (primarily the social democrats), who insisted that delegates to the Office's assembly should be appointed on the basis of the results of the last elections to the Austrian Reichsrat in 1911; this would have given the left a majority of delegates. This demand proved to be an insurmountable obstacle which ultimately killed off the entire project.

## **Transformation of education in Moravská Ostrava after 1918 in selected aspects. On examples of preschool, elementary and grammar schools**

Lukáš Lisník

This study traces the development of Ostrava's education system following the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic, emphasizing the changes that affected both Czech-language and German-language schools as well as briefly mentioning Polish and Jewish schools in the city. The text offers a new perspective on the transfer of children to different schools after 1918, especially the decline in the numbers of children enrolled at German schools – a process that was not only caused by transfers to Czech schools (as almost all older studies have claimed), but also arose as a consequence of the demographic crisis brought about by the First World War; this crisis affected all parts of the primary education system during the first half of the 1920s, regardless of the language of instruction. The article also outlines the reorganization of German-language schools, compulsory transfers of children to Czech-language schools, changes in the school administration system within Ostrava, and the rapid establishment of a large number of Czech schools, which suffered from a lack of teachers, premises and equipment. The study focuses primarily on Moravská Ostrava, but in order to contextualize developments in this central part of the city, it also touches on other

municipalities which from 1924 onwards were incorporated into the newly created administrative unit of Greater Ostrava.

### **The fire of Ostrava in 1556 and its possible tracks in archeological sources**

Zbyněk Moravec

Ostrava suffered several fires during the early part of its history. One of the most destructive fires was caused by a master clothmaker named Jan Hunka in 1556. Information about this catastrophic event can be found mainly in written sources, but archeological surveys also provide an insight into fires. Areas affected by fires have been identified at various building parcels in the city (surveys conducted at the Ostrava City Museum, building no. 32 on the central square Masarykovo náměstí, the site of a former parcel in Pivovarská Street, and parcels belonging to the local parish) and in public spaces (the square Masarykovo náměstí, Muzejní Street). Points of origin have been identified mainly within building parcels (apart from the former parcel in Pivovarská Street), where archeologists have found incinerated fragments of vessels, large quantities of stove tiles, plus items made of glass and iron (mainly iron fixing components used in construction) and of course burned wall surfaces from buildings made of timber and mud.

### **Syndicus in the time of regulated municipal councils. The example of Moravská Ostrava syndicus Kašpar Hauke**

Leontina Kršková

This study focuses on the municipal administration of the subject town of Moravská Ostrava during the 19th century. It traces the life of the syndicus Kašpar Hauke, comparing the scandal of his embezzlement of municipal funds with a similar scandal involving the syndicus Johan Rambousek from Dačice. The study also reveals that several other municipal officials faced similar problems during the same period.

### **Josef Šavel – life and work**

Jiří Sochorek

This article explores the life and work of Josef Šavel. It traces the career and personal life of this notable figure who, after starting out as a coal miner, worked his way up to become a well-known trade union official and the editor of the Austrian Miners' Union magazine "Nazdar", making an important contribution to improving conditions for labourers in the Ostrava region during the first half of the 20th century. His talent for diplomacy and his deep knowledge of the region led to his appointment as the negotiator responsible for securing the future of the Těšín region at the Paris Peace Conference. Josef Šavel's life and career also

offers insights into the complex development of the political left in the Ostrava-Karviná region, which during the inter-war Czechoslovak Republic was one of the strongest bastions of social democracy in the country. The article also presents Josef Šavel as a certain type of socialist who (unlike his close associates Vojtěch Brda and Josef Pergl) survived the sweeping purges of the Czechoslovak Communist Party during the 1920s and remained a party member until his death. Despite his undoubted contribution to the development of the Ostrava-Karviná region, Šavel has not previously been studied by historians; this study therefore draws mainly on documents from his posthumous estate, held at the Ostrava City Archives.

### **Translation of Vítkovice industrialist Adolf Suess' daughter Memoirs**

Hana Šústková

The memoirs written by the daughter of the Vítkovice businessman Adolf Suess at the turn of the 20th century offer a rare and valuable insight into the high bourgeois German-speaking community. They document the mental models of a very specific former part of Ostrava's society – a community of which very few records have survived. The immediacy of the memoirs, which were written for family members and were not intended to be published, provide information about the everyday lives of the wealthy bourgeoisie in a provincial city within the Habsburg Monarchy, though the members of this community also had family ties to Vienna, the capital of this multinational entity. The comparison of life in Ostrava and Vienna remains of great interest to readers even today.