

**Conference POSSIBILITIES
AND LIMITS OF RESEARCH
OF THE HISTORY OF
COLLEGE EDUCATION
AFTER 1945.**

October 14-5, 2009, Hradec
Králové, Czech Republic.

The above-mentioned conference was devoted to colleges which are typical urban institutions. And it was and is also a college educational system for which cities are considered to be centers of cultural life and focal points of innovation. On the other hand, universities often changed into fuses of conflict, or in them in concentrated form loyalty to totalitarian regimes arose.

The aim of the organizers of the conference was to encompass schools of all levels and types in Czech cities after 1945 as well as the problem of education and intellectuals in a totalitarian regime. The history of colleges was to be embedded in the general social frame, but not compared to the history of college education in other socialist states.

In the introductory paper, Jan Mervart, a Hradec Králové historian, focused on characteristics of the communist regime in the 1960s. In doing so he cautioned against the assessment of those years as a time of continual liberalization and/or eras in which communist power stood on one hand and opposition intellectuals on the other. At the same time he pointed out a certain programmed helplessness of the intelligentsia who did not go against the essence of the regime.

The first thematic session was devoted logically to Charles University. In his

paper, Prague historian Petr Cajthaml characterized the mechanisms which the Communist Party – despite certain periods of relative social relaxation – attained a leading position at the university. Vice deans and assistant professors, as well as applicants for studies abroad were approved by the City Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Party groups were also founded as part of scientific councils and the influence of communists at the university gradually strengthened. Departments of Marxism-Leninism existed independently of the heads of the universities. Michal Svatoš, Cajthaml's colleague from the Historic Institute of Charles University and Charles University Archive, presented the history and results of his institution (founded in 1959), which he termed *a little island of positive deviance*. His criticism concerned only the dominance of older history in research and its certain fragmentation. Bohdan Zilynskyj of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University chose the topic of Ukrainian students as a specific national, linguistic and religious group at the university in the years 1945-1949. He was concurrently interested in where this group came from and what its ethnic and political orientation was.

The second session, focused on the most controversial faculty of Charles University – the Philosophical Faculty, was the domain of young and very critically humored historians, its contemporary workers. Kateřina Volná focused mainly on the role of the State Police at the faculty. In contrast to the generally reigning myth about the “screened” school, she pointed out that the awareness of the STB (State Police) was not absolute,

despite the fact that this repressive institution watched over foreign teachers, broadened the atmosphere of fear and worked in cooperation with the heads of the faculty. In the years 1974-1985, then, youths became, from the viewpoint of the State Police, the main surveilled group. Jakub Jareš criticized the mechanisms of the admission of students into college studies in the fields of history and ethnography in 1987. Ideology, according to him, compromised, however, with unrestrained clientelism. Examinations became untransparent and politicized. Matěj Spurný then rejected the image of the Prague Philosophical Faculty as a victim of communist terror and the image of the society of totalitarian Czechoslovakia as a society generally longing for liberty, controlled by only a handful of the powerful.

The third session focused on medical and pedagogical faculties. Local historian František Dohnal presented the history of one of seven medical faculties, that of Hradec Králové, which was founded in 1945, and generally the development of the idea of military medicine. Cajthaml's and Svatoš's colleague Petr Svobodný spoke of the specifics of medical faculties and of the difficulties which historians encountered. Brno historian Jaroslav Vaculík dealt with the model case of the fate of pedagogical schools: the school he attended, the Pedagogical Faculty of Masaryk University. He mainly presented to the audience opinions about the mission of pedagogical faculties and their place in higher education. In the last paper of the first day, Pilsen historian Naděžda Morávková portrayed Adolf Zeman (1902-1985), a college teacher

and recognized social and economic urban historian who did not succeed in obtaining scientific esteem for his work in the society of the time.

On the next day, two sessions were also devoted to colleges. Ostrava archivist Jindra Biolková focused on the history of a mining college – the Technical University of Ostrava and/or the character of research sources. Brno archivist Alena Mikovcová attempted to understand the fate of the Agricultural College in Brno after the Second World War, when the school found itself in danger of being closed. Finally it went through the system of so-called political cleansing and it became Sovietized. At the same time it was victimized in the process of so-called collectivization. Local historian Michal Strobach described the specifics of the Hradec Military Aviation Academy as a type of post-war military education. Markéta Devátá of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences in Prague presented research of the history and functioning of the Political and Social College (1945-1949), research also carried out by her colleague Doubravka Olšáková. A similarly controversial school – the University of November 17 (1961-1974), which was founded because of a decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was the subject of extensive research of the young historian Marta Edith Holečková. She described the problem of the structure of the institution, characteristics of the students, relation to foreign students from the so-called Third World, and contributions of the college.

The third thematic session of the second day dealt with college teachers.

Olomouc historian and archivist Pavel Urbášek attempted to describe the relation of the regime to college teachers and the composition of their profile in the '50s, in the '60s and in the years of normalization when a new generation of teachers allegedly understood the party membership card pragmatically, like a workbook.

The concluding session of the conference, called *After college*, was opened by Prague anthropologist Blanka Soukupová with the paper "The role of intellectuals in post-war public opinion." It was followed by Jana Švehlová's (read by Eva Bláhová) emotional paper about the daughters of farmers in the '50s. The subject was the psychic world of women who could not, for political reasons, study and still feel the handicap today. Today a group of them made up of 100 members work under the patronage of their benefactor, Meda Mládková.

In conclusion let us add that the Hradec conference, which was to have been linked to a conference in Olomouc in 2011, brought out a large quantity of data, methodical and civic stimulants. Open and in places explosive discussions clarified the fact that the topic is scientifically and socially enormously topical and stimulating; and this especially today, when again there is strong influence of the incompetent powerful, who would gladly get rid of the true mission of the university: scientific work and the training of intellectuals and competent specialists. Thanks for the exemplary organization of the conference go mainly to the historian Sylva Sklenářová of the university archive in Hradec Králové.

Blanka Soukupová

Conference THE POLITICS OF CULTURE. PERSPECTIVES OF STATELESS NATIONALITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS.

April 9-10, 2010, Warsaw, Poland.

The international conference with almost thirty speakers was organized by Professor Nowicka -Rusek under the patronage of the Institute of Social Studies of the University of Warsaw. The aim of the conference was to focus, from various points of view, on stateless ethnic groups and nationalities which try to negotiate and vindicate the legitimization of their very existence and their (mostly cultural-language) demands in today's world. The conference had seven thematic sessions in which scholars from several social science disciplines, mostly sociology, anthropology, ethnology and political science, addressed the audience.

The first, opening session, called "Theories and Perspectives," outlined key themes and concepts which all the researchers into stateless ethnic groups and nationalities have to deal with in their research. Ewa Nowicka-Rusek presented her ideas on the so much-discussed concept of ethnic identity which in her interpretation can encompass three different variants: "multi-story" identity ("sandwiched"), "additive" identity ("assembling" identity when to an A identity another B identity is added as an equal one) and "anti-ethnic" identity, which stands for a situation when a person refuses to express his/her identity in ethnic terms. Professor Szpociński discussed in his paper topics of historical memory and politics of its keeping,

which are key factors in construction of ethnic identities. After that Katarzyna Warmańska focused very interestingly on researchers themselves, who via their research not only describe, analyze and interpret ethnic groups – but also co-create them. Besides the performative character of social science research, she came to think of the fragility of minority research at home (“anthropology at home”), which cannot avoid the dangers of folklorization, exoticization and the loss of “sensitivity to difference.” She talked about the Internet as a relatively new and, at least in Central Europe, unsurveyed phenomenon and its impact on both the formation of ethnic groups and minorities and on the formation of their image: unprecedented possibilities of spreading information forms both images and knowledge of majority in minority and self-understanding and self-presentation of given groups. The session ended with a paper by Przemysław Nosal: “Flag, Anthem, Sports team. Sports as a tactic of stateless nations and ethnic groups,” in which, inspired by Michel de Certeau and his concepts of strategies and tactics, he conceptualized minority ethnic group constituting as tactics, i.e., acting beyond official institutions and structures of power. Further, he interpreted this way performances connected with sports events as possible (and very persuasive) public representations of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Thereby he introduced to the discussion another two topics connected with the politics of culture and stateless groups: power and representation.

The second session of the conference was devoted to the Aromanians. The

most interesting point of the session was possibly the fact that in one session scientists (Dimitris Michalopoulos, Markéta Vaňková) and minority activists (Nikola Minov, Vlatko Dimov) met, so the conference participants had the occasion to compare on one hand a self-presentation of Aromanian activists and their vision of desirable and effective cultural politics – and on the other hand scientific interpretation and a critical analysis of these activists’ efforts. Moreover, the papers covered a wide range of a paradigmatic scale of points: from significantly primordial and essentialist points (Minov) to clearly constructivist ones, emphasizing the performative and processual character of ethnic identity forming (Vaňková).

The next session (and in the Central European context the expected one) regarded the Romani people. Identity politics of the Roma was researched both in the wider context of post-socialistic transformation (Jennifer Mitchell) and also in particular minority politics of nation states (Malgorzata Glowacka-Grajper, Izabela Bukalska). Different concepts of the Roma were very inspiring: Izabela Bukalska concentrated mainly on what she called “Romani culture and tradition” and researched possibilities of realization and performing of the culture and traditions within the limits given by Hungarian cultural (minority) politics. On the other hand, Malgorzata Glowacka-Grajper doubted understanding of Romani identity as based primarily on shared culture features and pointed to the fact that it is social position rather than culture which defines the Roma and their identity politics in Central Europe.

The last session of the first conference day was devoted to minorities and emigrants. The first paper summarized the complicated situation of the Chinese Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Martyna Weronika Duda). The next two papers focused on the situation of working migrants in Europe, in particular Polish female emigrants in London (Marta Bierca) and Chechen emigrants in Poland (Karolina Lukasiewicz). In their presented research, the authors inquired into the topic of transnationalism and they were interested in the possibilities of identification with the receiving society as well as in the influence of the original, sending country and the relationship network mainly rooted there. Chechnya was also the topic of Jan Kruszyński, whose presentation provoked a heated discussion – however, as an explicit critique of the Russian aggression in the Chechen war from the point of view of human rights it was not a scientific analysis of the conflict. Hence, the discussion had two courses – on one hand the historical background of the conflict and “justification” of the speaker’s point were debated; and on the other hand the question whether such a presentation is acceptable at a scientific conference was being solved. The debate is all the more interesting in that activist and as well “non-scientific” presentations of the Aromanians did not cause similar critical response – evidently because they did not evoke any negative emotion in the audience contrary to the painful and bloody Chechen conflict.

The second day of the conference had three thematic sessions. The first one, called “The Ruthenians and the Kashu-

bians” was, as is clear from its name, devoted to the situation of two minorities in Poland – the Ruthenians (the Lemkos) and the Kashubians. The common theme of the papers was the topic of identity and status of the minorities in the Polish society and the question of their recognition as a minority or a regional group. Jacek Nowak was interested in the crucial role of (de)territorialization of the Polish Ruthenians’ identity and in his paper he stressed the importance of place, memory and civil society in the processes of Ruthenians’ ethnic identity forming. Sławomir Łodzyński talked about the Kashubians and the Silesians, whose different situations were presented via the prism of state institutions’ influence. He aimed his analysis at classification strategies through which the state creates categories as “ethnic minorities,” “regional groups,” “minority language,” “indigenous people,” etc. – he analyzed the National Population Census and the Law of National Minorities from 2005. The last paper of the session dealt, for organization reasons, with the Silesians: Grażyna Kubica-Heller in her presentation drew attention to the importance of local and regional identities which, in the case of some groups, can play a more important role than ethnic identities.

The following session called “Various situations, various answers” was on one hand more heterogeneous – however, on the other it brought a possibility of a very interesting comparison of differences of the situations of several minorities, as well as differences of theoretical backgrounds to their research. The rather general presentation of Katarzyna Środa-Wieckowska about “using and abusing of

a tradition” in the construction of ethnic groups was followed by a nicely empirical study by Marta Petryk, who in her research describes the process of forming and negotiating of not evident identity of the Norwegian Kvens and their minority status in Norwegian legislation. Adam Stepień also pursues his research in the Northern Europe. He is interested in the Saami people (the Sami) and in his presentation he focused on the Pan-Saami trans-border cooperation and integration processes, which he presented from the point of view of political science with an accent on the legislative background for international cooperation of trans-border minorities. In the following paper, Kristin Pfeifer dealt with the question of cultural preservation strategies which she presented on the example of the Moroccan Amazigh Movement and she, as well as previous speakers, pointed out the importance of official recognition of the status of a minority. Dominika Michalak, author of the last paper of the session, talked on a rather different topic. The presentation, called “The Trouble with Recognition: What Do the Jazz School Handbooks Teach Us About the African American Roots of Jazz” summarized the results of her content analysis of jazz textbooks.

The last panel was devoted very symptomatically (regarding where the conference took place) to Silesia and the Silesians. The three presented papers concurred and in a complex way they introduced the situation of the Silesians, whose identity varies on the scale from ethnic indifference via regional identity (based on historical-geographical features of the region) to identity evi-

dently ethno-national. An interesting presentation by Kazimierz Wódcz and Maciej Witkowski dealt with the public discourse of Silesian regional identity, which is formed by public visual representations and performances. Elżbieta Anna Sekula and Marek S. Szczepański focused rather on political aspirations of local actors and their relationship to various traditions of Upper Silesia which are the basis of current collective identity. Robert Geisler’s presentation was the most theoretical one in the session – backgrounded by interpretative anthropology, it tried to view Silesia and its development in the 20th century as a parallel to the (post)colonial situation.

Two things must be said at the end. Willingness of the conference participants and the speakers to discuss was a very beneficial aspect of the conference. Discussions usually mediated communication within the panels and they changed the sessions into meaningful and coherent units. On the other hand, it cannot pass unmentioned that the scope of the conference (almost 30 papers in two days) demanded much attention of the conference participants and their ability to absorb the presentations. On the whole and according to talks among the participants, I guess that the conference was generally understood to be very successful and stimulating. Even though it did not offer a particular prognosis of *perspectives of stateless nationalities and ethnic groups*, it enabled an intensive discussion about a wide range of culture politics of ethnic groups and minorities.

Markéta Vaňková

**Czech-Slovak Conference
MINORITY MEMORYSAPES.
COMPETITIVE SOCIETIES OF
MEMORY?**

June 10-11, 2010, Prague, Czech Republic.

The “Minority Memoryscapes. Competitive Societies of Memory?” conference organized by the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague and the Jewish Museum of Prague, took place in Prague on the premises of the Jewish Museum on June 10-11, 2010. Blanka Soukupová, Zuzana Jurková, and Hedvika Novotná were the chief conference organizers. Costs of the conference were covered from a Charles University Special Research project called “Postmodern Society – Memory – Culture – Identity.”

The conference was started by Miloš Havelka, who welcomed all the participants and introduced Jan Sokol, who gave the opening speech. In it, he stressed two aspects of minorities that are important for a majority. Minorities are crucial, Sokol argued, because they can initiate a change in a society, which is almost impossible for a majority in its homogeneity and sterility; and they are nonetheless important because a minority provides confidence and elementary coherence for a society. After that Blanka Soukupová summarized the development of Czech urban anthropology and presented the three main topics of the conference, i.e., city – minority – and the plurality of memoryscape.

The first day of the conference was devoted mainly to the Jewish minority in Czech, Moravian and Slovak cities and

towns. Peter Salner presented nine possible Jewish views of Bratislava in the 20th century. Then Ivica Bumová talked about the relation between the Slovak majority and the Jewish minority memoryscapes in Dolní Kubín (Žilina region) in the 1930s-'40s. Prague in Jewish memory after the Shoah was the topic of Blanka Soukupová's paper, in which she was mainly concerned with places of memory (Nora 1984-92) and their changes in time. Memoryscape of Brno in the period between the wars was the topic of the paper presented by Jana Nosková. In her analysis she identified the topos of Brno as a “children's paradise,” as a forgotten time of co-dwelling of Czechs, Germans and Jews; however the analysis also showed that Czechs and Germans stressed different time periods in their stories and among all the three stood unambiguous borders. Hedvika Novotná was also interested in places of memory and paid special attention to the construction of tradition in today's Jewish town in Prague, e.g., the Disneyfication of the sites. In her analysis, she used the concept of communicative and cultural construction of memory (Assman 1992). The morning session was ended by Zuzana Skořepová who sketched for the audience a mental map of the life of Bedřich Feigl, a Jewish painter of the first half of the 20th century, who lived in Prague, Berlin and London.

The afternoon session was opened by Daniel Luther, who followed up on the theme of construction of collective memory by analyzing how the official institutions operated with historical knowledge. He discussed symbolical contents in the varying topography of

Bratislava's streets and squares during the 20th century. But the topic of a synagogue and the Jewish minority in a small town was discussed mainly in the afternoon. Both Blanka Altová and Jaroslav Alt were concerned in their linked papers with the synagogue in Uhlířské Janovice. The former dealt with its cultural and historical memory while the latter with the design of the liturgical space and its conversion (into a hairdresser's). Magdalena Myslivcová talked about the synagogue in Písek. She inquired into the construction of memory and whether in this case we can talk rather about a majority or a minority construct. Zuzana Jurková presented the former synagogue in Kladno as a place of getting together, which was the crucial occasion for establishing contact and dialogue between British and American Jews and The Czechoslovak Hussite Church in Kladno.

The second day of the conference was devoted mostly to other minorities in Czech, Moravian and Slovak cities and towns. The morning session was opened by the paper of Helena Nosková on Králíky (Ústí nad Orlicí region). She described changes in social and cultural capital in Králíky, created on the basis of memories of local Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians and Polish Czechs. After that Slavomíra Ferenčuchová and Petr Kouřil discussed contemporary "provoked memory" in the originally German landscape surrounding Brno. On one hand, they concentrated on documenting the crosses placed in the landscape and, on the other hand, on presenting the activities followed in order to remember the traditions of villages – such as the St. Wenceslas feast (in Czech

"Svatováclavské hody"). They mapped the strategies of re-interpretation and confrontation of different memories based on interviews and fieldwork research. The morning session finished with the paper by Libuše Groberová on the reflection of the capital, Prague, in a north-Moravian village X.

In the afternoon session, Petr Gibas, Karolína Pauknerová and Bedřich Čížek devoted their paper to a special minority of Prague allotment gardeners and the changes this type of gardening has been undergoing in the post-socialist era. They presented a brief history of these allotments, the legal changes that affect allotment gardening and the discursive analysis of newspapers and webpages about Prague allotments, the concept of greenery in particular, and the debate on why allotments should stay or disappear. The last paper, presented by Barbora Vacková and Lucie Galčanová, dealt with (non)existing minorities within the modernistic town of Zlín. The authors concentrated on the period between 1920 and 1940, the times of the development of the Bata factory and "Bata-ville," and on narratives of modernity and its impact on the town of Zlín.

The conference was ended by a discussion on the course of the conference and the possible future direction of Czech urban anthropology (or urban studies) and, in particular, how the participants of the conference will cooperate in the future and what their points of concurrence are.

During the conference, various attitudes about how to investigate memory, memoryscapes and minority memory within the urban context were presented.

Places of memory (papers by H. Novotná and B. Soukupová) and the concept of provoked memory (S. Ferenčuchová and P. Kouřil) were among the most interesting ones. Jewish minority and construction of Jewish memory (or memoryscape) formed a dominant interest in the presented papers. Only a few papers concentrated on other minorities: e.g., the German minority (J. Nosková in Brno between the wars) or the coping with ruins of originally German landscape around Brno (S. Ferenčuchová and P. Kouřil). The very special case of minorities represented the minorities of the modernist Baťa city of Zlín (inhabitants of the original Zlín, seniors, etc., in the paper of B. Vacková and L. Galčanová).

Even though such a conference cannot act as a representative overview of Czech and Slovak urban studies or urban anthropology, in this case it showed a coherent picture of how social sciences can deal with minority memory. The outcomes of the conference will shortly also become accessible to other interested scholars and students, as the conference will have permanent form in a collective monograph called "Unquiet Memoryscape of a (Post)Modern City" which will be prepared from chosen conference papers.

Karolína Pauknerová

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SIXTH SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSIC AND MINORITIES

July 19-25, 2010, Hanoi, Vietnam.

The international ethnomusicological organization the *International Council for Traditional Music* (ICTM) has its world conference every odd-numbered year (the most recent one took place last year in the South African city of Durban; the next one is planned for July 2011 in St. John, Canada). In the even years the majority of its study groups meet; the work in them is usually considered the main reason for the ICTM.

The *Music and Minorities* study group is one of the newest (founded in 1999) and most numerous (approximately 300 members). Its last, sixth meeting took place June 19-24, 2010, in Hanoi, North Vietnam. In comparison with the next-to-last meeting in Prague (May 2009, see *Urban People* 2008, 2: 228) the number of active participants decreased and their composition changed. This was the understandable consequence of the relatively high travel costs, which prevented the participation of the majority of South and East European researchers, who otherwise are very numerous. Of the approximately 40 active participants, one-fourth were directly from Vietnam, and a further eight from Southeast and East Asia. More important than the home country of the researchers, however, were the unsurprisingly various discourses which became evident both in the participation of conference topics and in the approach to them. The topic *Other Minorities* was chosen only by the Finn-

ish group, who dealt with the Swedish linguistic minority in Finland; the Australian Cornelia Dragusin, who using the example of Japanese Tenrikyo demonstrated the formation of a new minority and two case studies of African material (the mendicant Ethiopian group Hamina and a Ghanian hiplife singer who use the Ga minority language). Similarly, few researchers chose the otherwise favorite topic of *Music and Minorities in Education*: Kai Aberg spoke about *The Transmission of Musical Knowledge and Music through Formal and Informal Education among Finnish Kaale (Roma)*; Hande Saglam focused on bimusicality among Austrian students of music, and Larry Hillarian dealt with teaching materials that acquaint secondary school pupils with (minority) Malaysian music in Singapore, thereby opening room for a further discussion of cultural plurality.

The absolute majority of contributors chose the third conference topic, *The Role of Music in Sustaining Minority Communities*. Within the topic, two tendencies loomed large: “conservational” (in the titles of the papers various forms of the word “preserve” appeared) and “observational.” To the former group belonged not only papers of our Vietnamese colleagues (e.g., the director of the hosting Vietnamese Institute of Musicology Le Van Toan spoke about *Collecting and Preserving Music of Ethnic Minorities; Experience from Vietnam*), but also, e.g., the paper of the Belgian ethnomusicologist Anne Caufriez, *The Female Polyphony of North Portugal*.

While the former tendency can be perceived rather fatalistically (even with the best attempt at preservation, cultural

expressions change, and this is understood as an impoverishment of cultural diversity; and “preservation” whether in the form of technically perfect recordings or, on the contrary, the introduction of the genre in the framework of, e.g., a musical festival is at least subconsciously felt as an unequal substitution), representatives of the other – “observational” – tendency usually attempt to ascertain how the changes in music relate to changes in culture (and this is whether music is considered a reflection of culture or as a constitutive element of it, and then as a possible agent of change). Both of the Czech papers belong in this area: Zuzana Jurková’s *Romani Worlds of Contemporary Prague*, about strategies of performances of Romani music, and Zita Skořepová Honzlová’s *Ziriab – Arabic Music in the Czech Republic*, about music as an expression of ethnic culture and religious identity of foreigners living in the Czech Republic for a long time. The papers of Dan Lundberg (about changes in relations between the Swedish majority and local travelers and musical reflections of these changes), Bozena Muszkalska (using Bakhtin’s concept of dialogicity in music in research of the Polish minority in Brazil) and Yoshitaka Terada (*Kulintang as a Pan-Filipino-American Identity*) were interesting.

The meeting of the Music and Minorities study group (which this time was called a Symposium) was linked to the meeting of the newest study group of Applied Ethnomusicology. I don’t consider very fortunate the partial connection of both groups on an organizational level (e.g., a common business) and personal connection (e.g., Music

and Minorities vice chairman Svanibor Pettan is, at the same time, chairman of Applied Ethnomusicology), but it is understandable. Mainly the concept of music cultures as irreversibly disappearing traditions in a globalizing world calls directly for a great variety of guidelines for their preservation. I heard two interesting papers, also during the connected sessions of both groups. The Nestor of Norwegian ethnomusicology Kjell Skjellstad, the painstaking and convincing advocate of the obligations of scientists to look for applications for their findings, told about a project connecting the concept of economic and cultural maintenance in Laos with the sustainability of a network of tens of NGOs. Here music becomes a building block of conscious ethnic identity in a new context. Todd Saurman, who has been working with his wife for a long time among ethnic minorities in Thailand, spoke about the reflective method in which through dialogues they help members of local communities to find what they consider to be culturally important, and to discover a way for viable transformation of what is basic.

Never before had a meeting of the *Music and Minorities* group received such official and visible support (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Vietnamese Institute of Musicology, Vietnam National Academy of Music), which was much more than just declared on the program pamphlet. The sessions took place either in a large hotel in the very center

of Hanoi or in the unbelievably well built and extensive Institute of Musicology; newspapers and television reported on the conference before the opening and during it... Musical ensembles from distant Ho Chi Minh City and also from Thailand and Java came to one of the concerts for participants of the conference. Not even such support, however, offset the rather depressing fact that the absolute majority of Vietnamese researchers did not speak English, the only language of the conference, and thus – despite the fact that they had simultaneous interpreters – there remained a human and professional separation. And thus one of the important “applications” was the very fact of the conference in Vietnam: to locals and to foreigners it was clear that no massive (even state) support replaces expertise and insight, without which it is again difficult to aspire to involvement in the main scientific stream. Despite all kinds of barriers, expenses and logistic demands, it is quite fine that this symposium could be organized outside of the Euro-Atlantic space. If (collective) science is to contribute to (collective) knowledge and understanding, it is only successful if it goes beyond the borders of “kindred” regions, which share not only language, but also style and the spirit of complete communication. How otherwise can we understand those whom we still don’t understand?

Zuzana Jurková