

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*