

## Second Czech History Competition

### “Memorials – Monuments: The Memory of My Homeland” 2002/2003

#### *Report*

Following the success of the 1<sup>st</sup> EUSTORY competition, the organizers were challenged with an uneasy task to choose a right theme for a competition that could attract the students from the capital as well as grammar school students from Eastern Moravia or Western Bohemia. The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual topic had been a considerably more complex one. The fates and destinies of the people as carved into the memorials – a theme which includes numerous challenges as compared with the last one, which had dealt with fates of the people who dared to face the totalitarian regime. It appears to be a theme that could be grasped with more difficulties; different viewpoint angles could have been applied here that might not be fully acceptable for the evaluator. A definite moral load was not always dissimulated inside.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> EUSTORY competition attracted not less than 102 papers, with total participation of 157 authors – students from all over the Czech Republic. Among them, grammar school students dominated. After a demanding decisive process, the first place was shared by two competitors, namely Martin Klement from Česká Lípa Grammar School, who submitted a paper titled “The Stone Memorials from 20<sup>th</sup> Century at Česká Lípa” and Martin Trepeš from the Prague Archbishop Grammar School for his case study titled “Following the Traces of Dr. Edvard Beneš at Kožlany”. In all, thirteen papers won their awards (since the second and third places had been shared, too). These papers originated from sixteen students in all, as some of them had been student team works.

The topics chosen by the participants were rather manifold. This reflects the general concept of the competition, which requires the attention on the hitherto unelaborated regional history, as well as an individual search for study objects. However, several dominating themes can be distinguished. The students mostly wrote on memorials from both of the World Wars. The Great War memorials remind the monuments with names of those fallen. Among them, the most numerous were the memorials of our legionaries. The Second World War has been reflected in memorials and memorial plates dedicated to the bravery and tragic fates of the resistance participants, paratroopers, partisans, Czech and foreign soldiers, but also the memorials dedicated to the military events, operations, victims and localities of the Nazi terror. Another important group consisted of the works dedicated to the memorials of important personalities, in particular to those from the First Republic era. Numerous works have been dedicated to the Jewish issue (fates of the Jewish cemeteries, for instance) and the memorials of the holocaust; followed the memorials of the events of 50'ies (namely memorials to the victims of the political processes, honorary cemetery of the political prisoners, etc.) Several competitors resolved to follow the fates of the memorials erected during the socialist era. As an exception some participants traced the memorials of other tragic events (the explosion in the Nelson Mine in 30'ies, for instance).

The student papers consisted mostly of surveys that aimed to depict, classify and describe the present state of these memorials as well as their history within the respective regions; some of them have focused on the history of the individual personalities or events, which were the objects of the memorials and plates; sometimes, their papers included the history of the place of piety, too. The competition included some studies in the conditions of origins and subsequent fates of the memorials connected with the changing political atmosphere.

The published competition miscellany contains a selection of the awarded papers.

The Second EUSTORY Competition had been officially terminated as of May 22, 2003, as the respective awards had been solemnly presented to the winners at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The ceremony was held in personal presence of the CAS Honorary President Prof. Rudolf Zahradník. All the participants of this session, be it students, their tutors, historians, members of the evaluation and organizational committees, or the representative of the Körber Foundation, agreed unanimously on the necessity, benefits and growing prestige of the EUSTORY Competition in the Czech Republic. The memorial ceremony was attended by some of the winners of the first run, too, who witnessed for the continuity between the both annual runs. The miscellany was presented to the public on October 13, 2004, then.

The Czech EUSTORY Competition Committee