panied by violence against Uniate priests and believers. Whereas Orthodox missionaries from Serbia and Russia called this movement a return by the Slav population to its true identity and belief, Czech officials and policemen in the communities affected considered what happened an uprising of the rural poverty against the local elites. Klaus Buchenau takes a close look at both interpretations and arrives at the conclusion that the clashes between Orthodox and Uniate believers have to be considered a conflict rather social than religious in nature. Their traditional assessment as “religious” has come about, as probably in some other historical cases as well, most of all because the majority of the sources that can be researched were written by the clergy, and because research tends to conclude from the presence of religious labels to a matter that religious motifs must have been indeed involved.

“TO MAKE THE NAMES COMPLY WITH THE DEMANDS OF THE TIME”

The Change of Toponyms (Names of Settlements, Communities, Streets, Public Buildings, and Areas or Features of the Landscape) in the Bohemian Lands after 1945

Milan Hlavačka

In the Bohemian lands, the alteration of toponyms was a process that took place in several stages, beginning with the end of World War I. It was completed after the ethnic German population had been expelled after 1945, and the communists had taken over power in 1948. The process of renaming settlements, streets and public venues was overseen in the late 1940s and the 1950s by several expert commissions, at first the Geographic Institute of the Armed Forces (Vojenský zeměpisný ústav) and the Topographical Commission of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts (Místopisné komise České akademie věd a umění), later belonging to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (Československá akademie věd). Archivists, historians, geographers, hydrologists, and linguists all contributed to the work of the commissions. The aim of renaming was, in the first place, to assert historical and territorial claims. In contrast to cities, towns, and villages, when it came to renaming streets, squares and other public venues not only national, but also ideological considerations did come into play. Thus, the new names reflected political vagaries as well.

The symbolic repossession of the public space in the Bohemian lands by renaming places (in the broadest sense of the word), may be considered determined and successful. It was regarded by the Czech population at the time and it is regarded even now as just. It has, however, led to a considerable depletion of the historical wealth of place names and thus to a loss of historical memory.