focus to include not only royal towns but the private tributary towns, whose economic growth based on exploitation of traditional economic instruments (economic liberties and rights) strongly characterizes the type of urban network in all three compared countries. The account of the legal framework and fundamental features of town economies and hinterlands on the basis of these criteria represents the starting point for a concluding summary. Jaroslav Miller agrees with Ch. Friedrichs and A. Cowan that, in the early modern period, towns appeared outwardly much the same as they had in the late medieval period. Neither with respect to the running of the town or the social structure within which internal communication took place were there dramatic changes underway. The family or individual who moved from one urban environment to another, his parents or, a couple of generations further on, his children or grandchildren would have been living in an environment that essentially functioned in the same way. Considering England at the end of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th century, Peter Borsay saw a change in the life style of the urban population, in the discovery of leisure, but above all in the transformation of the functions of the town and the development of towns with a specialized function.[3] From Jaroslav Miller's analysis it follows that the society of the not particularly populous towns of East Central Europe was not just very close to its agricultural hinterland, but fairly impervious to change. Naturally, aspects of urban life take different forms viewed through the eyes of old inhabitants, immigrants who can and wish to immigrate, and those who wish, at all costs, to preserve their difference. They are seen one way by a town council and another by a nobleman or other feudal or ecclesiastical authority. Jaroslav Miller refers to differences in the average figures for density of population and the size of the towns of Western Europe, especially France (p. 33). We should not forget that the picture was far from homogenous, for small towns were very numerous and close in their relationship to the countryside. The average figures have been distorted by the great ports, provincial centers and capital cities. It is no accident that Peter Clark and Bernard Lepetit devoted a collaborative project to the small towns of Europe.[4] In France there is an association for the history of small towns and a whole range of studies on the theme.[5] The continuing importance of the small towns, the traditional character of their populations and their close relationship to the countryside was pointed out as early as the 19th century by Eugen Weber, and later by Fernand Braudel.[6] Despite this, the pre-industrial period is considered important for the urbanization of European society.[7]

In conclusion it must be said that the theme of the book is a fascinating one, and that Jaroslav Miller has put together and organized marvelous material which can be used for future research and the enlargement of the comparative perspective to include other European regions. Miller's comment on and responses to international discussion on the problems concerned are very interesting and readable. His bibliography and catalogue of sources is admirable, and will be appreciated by any researchers wanting to pick up his themes. In this book, Miller also shows that the unit of comparison need not necessarily be the state, but can be a social phenomenon, and that quantification can be combined with the qualitative analysis needed to draw attention to the actors in the processes explored and in some cases to compensate for a lack of official records providing for statistics. Of course, from the point of view of the historiography of events, this approach is misleading and comparative analyses involve inadmissible simplification and schematization. This tension between the comparative and narrative is classical, long familiar and useful. By means of his definition of the six levels of comparison, Jaroslav Miller, on the one hand, follows basic criteria that he exploits for the regional typology of the town network and, on the other, gives readers an insight into the town environment, its mechanisms, and urban stories. By characterizing the urban societies of East Central Europe as conservative and closed, he inspires us to carry on looking for the relationships between an innovative approach to social problems and urban environments.

Luďa Klusáková

3 P. BORSAY: *History of Leisure: The British Experience Since 1500*, Palgrave 2006, pp. 1–35 and especially his earlier work on the renaissance of English towns.

4 B. LEPETIT: In search of the small town in early nineteenth-century France in P. CLARK: *Small towns in early modern Europe*, Cambridge 1995;

5 E.g. J.-P. POUSSOU (ed.): *Les petites villes du sud-ouest de l´antiquité a nos jours*, Mamers 2006.

6 E. WEBER: *La Fin des Terroir. La modernisation de la France rurale 1870–1914*, Paris 1983 (first in Stanford 1976); F. BRAUDEL: L'Identité de la France I. Histoire et environement, Paris 1986.

7 E. MAUR in Pavla HORSKÁ – Eduard MAUR – Jiří MUSIL: Zrod velkoměsta. Urbanizace českých zemí a Evropa [The Birth of the Metropolis. The urbanisation of the Czech Lands and Europe], Paseka: Praha/Litomyšl 2002, pp. 80–120.

Peter Salner: MOZAIKA ŽIDOVSKEJ BRATISLAVY (Mosaic of Jewish Bratislava).

Bratislava: Albert Marenčin Vydavateľstvo PT, 2007, 199 pp., photographs, ISBN 978-80-89218-37-0.

"The city is the world," wrote Marc Augé, a French urban ethnology classic.8 In his new monograph, however, Peter Salner, a Bratislava ethnologist, presents the capital of Slovakia in its past appearance: during the First Republic and the Second Republic and at the time of the Slovak State. His main interest, nevertheless, does not capture the city as a whole, but, primarily, so-called Jewish Bratislava.

During the first leafing through this charming book with its numerous historic photographs from the time of the Hungarian monarchy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Czechoslovak Republic and partly also the Second World War, the reader is already seized by nostalgia: that is, we often look at a Bratislava that

8 Augé, M. (1994). *Pour une anthropologie des mondes contemporains,* Paris, Aubier.

disappeared (frequently, too, because of the insensitive urban renewal of the city space). And even these places that resisted the pressure of the most varied of times are different and somehow less authentic, beautiful and intimate. Perhaps one should look for the cause of this effect in the disappearance not only of the buildings, but also in the prewar lifestyle of Bratislava, which the author thoroughly characterizes as a multi-ethnic and multicultural, trilingual (Hungarian-German-Slovak) city with a cultivated capacity for tolerance. The newly accented trilinguality, however, is bound to the character of the time, not to the genius loci of the city. The Czechs were expelled during the Second Republic; the majority of the Bratislava Jews were murdered during the Shoah or they left in one of the waves of emigration from Bratislava after the Second World War. That time also saw the displacement or forced expulsion of local Germans and Hungarians.

The Bratislava world – or, perhaps, Bratislava worlds would be better – thus developed. The book shows the history of the city itself in Jaroslav Franek's literarily conceived foreword: the retrieval of the radiating past of the city until the present. His ambition was also, however, to sketch the development of Jewish Bratislava from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century (with intermittent time overlaps). Even if this preliminary text cancels out occasional factographic errors (e.g., Franek writes about the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1782 [p. 10]; it is possible to controvert the minority policies of Joseph II), above all, one can positively appreciate his attempt at a comparison of the Slovak and European development of the relation of governments to the Jews. Franek rightly connected the acme of Jewish Bratislava to the end of the 18th century (pp. 13-14) and rightly pointed out the year 1848 – from the viewpoint of the relation of the majority to the minority – as a key year. By comparing Bratislava with Prague at the end of the 19th century, we ascertain that Bratislava (with more than 10 % of the Jewish population [p. 20]) probably had over 5 % more Jews than Prague. Perhaps thanks to the proximity to Vienna, the Jewish national movement (Zionism) came here at about the same time as to Prague at the end of the century before last.

Peter Salner mainly organized his pictures of the Bratislava worlds on the basis of oral-history interviews (video recordings, 1994-1997) with witnesses of the Shoah from Bratislava (50 testimonies). Supplementary sources were archival material, press of the period, and published memoirs.

In the first chapter, Salner depicted the dramatic beginning of the First Republic and the relation of the Bratislava Jews, traditionally pro-monarchy oriented, to it: from mistrust (Salner justifiably adds "mutual") and abhorrence, from the first pogroms to identification with Masaryk's Czechoslovakia, which meant – with the exception of a pogrom in 1936 – an era of peace and the development of the community (e.g., in 1930, 14,882 Jews lived in Bratislava, i.e., 11 % of the population of the city [p. 43]; the following year 30 Jewish guilds worked here [p. 43]; the Jewish People's Kitchen offered its services. The Jews had a religious, political, nationally and linguistically structured community speaking five main languages (p. 47). Alongside a majority of Orthodox Jews in Bratislava, there were also Neolog Jews and a minority of atheists. Besides Orthodox Jews and Zionists, there were assimilated Hungarians, Germans and Slovaks.

The second chapter of Jewish Bratislava approaches Jewish institutions and life in the city in the interwar period from the viewpoint of witnesses. Thus pictures of three Bratislava synagogues, Bratislava streets and squares, apartment houses, Jewish quarters, distinctive shops and enterprises, walks, schools, etc., parade before us. We feverishly read about memories of mainly good neighborly relations, Bratislava shops and markets, playgrounds and teasing, but also of household facilities of the time and, finally, also of the inhabitants of the city: Jews and non-Jews. No less colorful is a recollection of the functioning of Jewish families: their economics and relation to religiosity; the way they spent their free time, including sport activities (soccer, swimming). At the end of this period reminiscences of the first anti-Semitic excess connected with projection of the film Golem (1936) also shine through. Anti-Semitism penetrated into everyday life. As in the Czech lands, in Bratislava the situation also markedly worsened during the Second Republic.

Salner devoted the third, socially most interesting, chapter to the so-called Bratislava Holocaust and subjectively experienced anti-Jewish measures and regulations. I fully agree with him that it is impossible to accept totally the famous Herberg triad of protagonists of the Shoah (perpetrators – victims – onlookers) (pp. 121-122) which, in addition, I feel ought to be in reverse order in that Slovak "solidarity" (like that of the Poles, the Czechs, etc.) with the Jews was often activated by their money and not by a human wish to help. Salner, however, offers the still-existing advocates of the Slovak State, in reality a satellite of Hitler's Germany, not only subjective experiences of humiliation, but also unambiguous testimonial documents concerning Slovak Aryanization and collaboration.

I also consider methodically correct the fact that Salner begins his own interpretation of the Holocaust at the end of 1938 and beginning of 1939, i.e., still in the era of the Second Republic. In Jewish memories, the Bratislava Holocaust takes the form of open physical violence in the streets and the expulsion and humiliation of the Jews. Its perpetrators were not only original German inhabitants, but also members of the feared Hlinka Guard. Bratislava was "beautified" with anti-Semitic posters and anti-Semitic caricatures, bans on entering for the Jewish population – symbols of the new era of the city. Witnesses remember forced migration of their families, Aryanization of Jewish enterprises, a ban on going to the majority of the schools and list of prohibitions contained in the so-called Jewish Code (November 9, 1941): for not wearing the Jewish star, deportation, etc. Some of the Jews chose a life in illegality, in hiding. In mid-1944 Bratislava was bombed. On April 4, 1945, it was liberated by the Red Army. Confused memories of poor clothing, undisciplined and evidently anti-Semitic Soviet soldiers seemed to usher in a continuation of the fates of the Jews after the Second World War. This book, however, ends with

a technical description of the road of Jews returning home (but only fewer than one-fifth of the prewar 15,000 Bratislava Jews returned).

Salner's book can be read in one sitting. Despite its undoubtedly enriching our knowledge of Jewish Bratislava, I would have a few suggestions. In view of the fact that photographs of the time create one half of the picture of Jewish Bratislava, the author could have paid more attention to their sequencing in the text and their captions (along with new names of squares and streets, we should also consistently find the old names and dates, etc.). Too much intense quotation of memories can also present a certain problem. The reader might welcome more general comments. And finally: I would welcome the application of the method of model analysis to the memories.

Blanka Soukupová

Žo Langerová: VTEDY V BRATISLAVE: MÔJ ŽIVOT S OSKAROM L. (At that Time in Bratislava: My life with Oskar L.)

Bratislava. Albert Marenčin Vydavateľstvo PT, SNM – Muzeum židovskej kultúry, 2007, 223 pp., photographs. ISBN 978-80-89218-50-9.

A memoir of extraordinarily high literary quality by Žo Langerová (1912 Budapest–1990 Uppsala, Sweden), born to a well-off assimilated Hungarian Jewish family and married in 1932 to Communist intellectual Oskar Langer (1907–1966 Bratislava), can be read for many reasons and in many ways. Thus, in Žo's fate are reflected all of the hopes, disappointments and paradoxes of the stormy 20th century experienced in traditionally nationalistically and politically exposed Central Europe. Žo Langerová was emancipated, educated, talented in sports and, above all, an immensely politically naïve girl from a middle-class Budapest family. She became an enthusiastic pupil and, later, also the wife of a young Slovak clerk inclined toward the left. Along with him, she experienced the atmosphere of multiethnic, trilingual Bratislava in the mid-1930s. She was not very conscious of her Jewishness, and she took the numerus clausus (restricted number) in interwar Hungary to be just some sort of data. Her Jewish identity came out only after World War II from negative experiences: the Shoah, political trials with anti-Semitic sub-texts although, in 1938, she had already become a Jewish refugee and had had to start a new home and new work in the United States of America. There she changed as a mother, as the assistant to the manager of a bookstore, and as the main bread-winner in her family. However, before that, she worked as a door-to-door sales representative and a waitress, while her linguistically untalented husband turned to political activity among the Slovak Communists. In 1946, on an invitation from the Communist Party of Slovakia, the family returned home and Oskar made a career as a member of the Central Committee of the Party. Žo worked in a branch of an export firm, where, for the first time, after the February Revolution, she encountered the absurdity of Socialist planning and the all-mighty "personnel officer." During that period, Oskar was arrested (1951). From a relatively privileged business representative of the Ligna commercial society, Žo and her two daughters became unwanted persons practically overnight. They were evacuated to a worse apartment and Žo had to step in as a production worker. Only later was she employed as an editor and clerk. In November 1952, after the news that her husband had been convicted, she was let go at work. Destalinization, during which her husband was rehabilitated (he was freed in May 1960 and rehabilitated in 1962) brought relatively better times to the family. Even before Oskar's return, the family, at that time already extensive, bought a beautiful apartment and later Žo obtained a practically unobtainable automobile. Oskar and other comrades, including those who had his imprisonment on their consciences, began to work on political change.

As I have already said, Žo Langerová's honest confession and perceptive observations regarding the political situation, interlarded humor and self-irony can be read in may ways. A historian mainly appreciates their painful attempts at rehabilitation of her husband, repeated meetings with Party officials, attempts at intercession with an influential left-oriented cousin –- the French actress Simone Signoret – as well as portrayals of conditions in Communist prison and the mechanism of interrogations and confessions. A political scientist will read the book as a very precise analysis of the mechanisms of power in a totalitarian system. For a psychologist, paramount will be Žo Langerová's psyche as a lonely woman who vacillates between unconditional loyalty to an unjustly imprisoned husband and the longing for happiness at the side of a sensitive man who would devote himself to his family and not to Party work. Very absorbing will be the description of her childhood with an authoritative mother and a loving, but passive father. Similarly interesting, of course, will be Oskar's psyche. A convinced Communist never admits that the foundation of the totalitarian system capsized; he feels that the Party only made certain errors. Using the example of her older daughter, Žo also analyzed relatively precisely the brainwashing of children's minds by the new regime. Also very stimulating is her portrayal of the way of thinking of the working class, which she calls small-town mentality (p. 86).

In the pages of Urban People, however, we mention the book for two main reasons: it captures very well the atmosphere of Bratislava from 1946 until August 1968, when Žo, along with her daughters, one of whom was a successful singer, decided to emigrate after the Soviet invasion. Postwar Bratislava is, in Langerová's memory, connected with apartment shortages, insufficient food, furniture, endless lines and a wave of dangerous nationalization. In view of the fact that Žo herself did not know enough Slovak at that time, she completely felt like a foreigner. After February 1948, a privileged layer came into being in the city. The Communist Party prepared Action B, the regime's eviction from Bratislava of members of the opposition (1952-1953). The displacement of Žo and her daughters to a Hungarian village, however, preceded her being let go from her job, the necessity of buying on the black market