The book is the continuation of a series which began with the successful publication of „The Human in Moravia in the Nineteenth Century“. New is that the team of editors has been enlarged by Libor Vykoupil. They asked the contributors again to describe the social transformation of various social groups by confronting their „collective biographies“ with the individual biographies of typical or outstanding representatives of the respective groups. In contrast to the earlier publication on the nineteenth century, the current „Human in Moravia“ does not focus on the social and geographical mobility but rather on the question, how social groups were shaped in the process of the dynamical political changes during the twentieth century. Thus the focus was laid on two questions: a) to which extent it was possible to trace the continuity between the Moravian society in the Austrian Empire and later on in Czechoslovakia and b) what kinds of modernisation took place in the course of the political reorganisation throughout the region after the First World War. This approach opens a discussion about such categories like politicization, nationalization and secularization of the society.

Due to the fact that for the period in question the contributors had rather few historiographical examples of specialised studies to build on their articles, most of them had to work with primary sources. The final product carries signs of those difficulties: the articles vary in the level of depth of study; some of them hardly go beyond a mere historical biography with quite trivial or superficial comments on the historical social context. Nevertheless, many contributors managed to cope with the task successfully, making significant progress in the research of so far scarcely studied historical material.

The book offers an instructive editorial introduction and consists of three parts with a German ‚Resümee‘: Der Mensch in Mähren in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. The chapters are designed basically according to the relation of the studied social groups to the process of modernisation and particularly to the question, if they were challenged as elements of „the past“, seen as an „everlasting“ historical continuity or if they constituted a brand new novelty.

The first chapter contains the stories of social groups, to be seen as conservative elements of the past, challenged by trends of modernisation and acting basically passive. The article on nobility in the First Czechoslovak Republic appears as most obvious. Nevertheless, Radmila Švařičková-Slabáková depicted the „strategies of survival in hostile society“ of the landowner Mensdorff-Pouilly in a more refined way than exposing mere passivity. She describes the publicist attempts to ground the position of the nobles among the new elites: particularly the attempts to profit from the ever redefined „noble“ ethos, which prescribed charity and honesty, as well as to highlight the contribution of the old aristocratic land patriots in a nationally divided society. The author stressed the demonstration of loyalty to the endangered Czechoslovakia in the time of the Munich Agreement (1938); this position of the significant group of German-speaking nobility revealed the political loyalty to the land and quite consequent antipathy with extremist nationalism. On the other hand, she sketched the exclusivist behaviour of the noble family: their entertainment activities used to be limited to the large family members and „the equal“, their membership in elitist clubs as well as the ambition to keep up the typical aristocratic lifestyle, such as inhabiting the representative palaces or practices of patronage and philanthropy. Curious are the quotations from letters, which testified the attempts.

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to keep the „aristocratic” hunting tradition on the one hand and the concessions to „clever” decision to use the prestigious hunting rights in estate woods as a good source of income in difficult times, on the other.

Not only the social inertia that had kept the nobles as a visible social group on the top of the society, which was taken into account for the first chapter. It is surprising at the first glance to see a noble, a conservative Jew, a teacher-museum custodian, a large scale entertainer, an official and a woman worker in a small textile manufacture grouped together. This grouping, however, was based on certain logic. After having read the articles, however, it is possible to agree that a teacher-museum custodian was classified as element of the past, while he gained his prestige from conservative elements of early stages of national movements, such as interest in history, archaeology and museum organising activities. The Entrepreneur Larisch-Mönich profited from the political unity, conjuncture and social connections in the Austrian Empire and was challenged by the new political order after 1918, when his properties scattered into different nation-states after the fall of the empire and the aspirations for the advance in the hierarchy of titled aristocracy were ruined together with the monarchy. The focus on the fate of well positioned German officials in Czechoslovakia justifies the placement of officials in this first group, while the article itself opens an interesting perspective on the continuity of the Austrian bureaucratic system in the Czech national state as well as on the position of once most influential German national minority in Moravia between the World Wars. The incorporation of a woman worker into this company about representatives of the past is most puzzling. It is dubious, if the mere fact that she worked in a small textile factory, which was owned by a Jewish family and was closed in the period of protectorate after March 1939, formed a good argument. The author encountered typical problems, which social historians of the modern times have to face if dealing with working class social history. While unable to count on the stable order of pre-modern institutions or sluggishness of folk culture, Michaela Chládková had to rely on factory documentation, which contain nothing more than names, birthdates and employment statistics, as well as pulp press for working class. The result was a „typical biography”, able to grasp most common name, age or marital status of the workers, yet vague. This abstract construct is unable to reach any kind of individuality or to transgress the trivial. It depicts a person apt to mass changes and mobility, but lacking individual initiative. In this way it contains rather the signs of modernity of the mass society than represents the challenged relics of the „past”.

The second chapter contains stories of social groups, taking positions which did neither advance nor decline throughout the period. Grouped together are well established professionals (university and high school teachers, lawyers, bankers and medical doctors), which since the end of the nineteenth century constituted elites in the modern society, as well as such „trans-historical” marginal groups like criminals and orphans. However, the stability of the position of the society, which was common for those elites and marginals, did not mean a stagnation of development. And, again it is important to stress, that the advancement or the decline of a certain professional group depended rather on the perspective taken by the author. The biography of lawyer Bulin, who died in emigration, can be hardly characterised as a failure, however the history of his free profession is rather depicted as the history of decline. Throughout the nineteenth century lawyers established themselves as an influential upper-middle class group and at the end of the century the Czech lawyers functioned as established elite in Czech national movement and politics. The link with politics, which put some lawyers at risk during the political turbulences in the first half of the century, or the activities of others by defend-

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3 Fišer, Zdeněk, Učitel-muzejník [Teacher-Museum Custodian], pp. 69-78.
4 Zařický, Aleš, Velkopodnikatel [Entrepreneur], pp. 46-55.
5 Vyskočil, Aleš, Úředník [Official], pp. 56-68.
6 Chládková, Michaela, Dělnice v malé textilní tvárně [Woman-Worker in a Small Textile Factory], S. 104-117.
7 Malíř, Jiří, Advokáti [Lawyer], pp. 158-193.

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ing political prisoners signalised the fate of the lawyers’ profession: in the period of totalitarian political regimes this influential professional group lost much of their independent position. Two articles on medical doctors, on the other hand, depict the role of professionals in building civil society, particularly establishing their reputation as „secular rationalist“ concurrence to the authority of church or organising social life of Slovak community in spa town of Luhačovice. Because of the focus on the provincial doctors the stories perhaps more remind the problems and the social role of free professionals in the passed nineteenth century than to the position of medical professionals in the governance of the twentieth-century society. The authors of the articles on marginal groups apparently made the most valuable contribution to this chapter. The history of orphans deals with so far less studied historical material and offers multifarious micro-historical perspectives on the forms of social care, its centralisation, and bureaucratisation. Lukáš Fasora shows restricting openness to cultural influences and variety in this field as well as changing attitudes towards the care of children at risk throughout the 20th century.

The third chapter offers a view on what the editors call „brand new novelties“ of the century. The articles on a catholic intellectual, a music composer and an ethnographer-film-maker presented short perspectives on biographies of people who managed to make their living from very specialised intellectual activities. The social conditions of their social emancipation as well as their social habitats are good topics which might be studied deeper. The biographies of woman trade union activist and rightist activist depicted the new forms of political activities and their fate in the extremely politicized society in Moravia. Finally a scout represents the true big novelty of the century: the organiser of wide-spread leisure activities. As the editors agree themselves, this kind of social actors might be represented wider, but stayed limited because of the lack of researchers for the time being.

The volume thus presents a mosaic of biographies, which are difficult to classify. Their relationship to modernity as well as the question of collective career or decline, are very much a matter of perspective and big themes themselves. The focus on the various segments of the Moravian society in the first half of the twentieth century opened the perspectives on the tight integration with the core lands of the Austrian Empire besides the conscious attempts to break with the Imperial tradition and further radical political changes, as well as quick modernisation besides the continuity of nineteenth-century and even Ancient Regime social patterns. The advantage of this regional perspective is that while giving the opportunity to settle the stories of social groups in micro-historical and tightly interconnected historical context, it provokes the question about the similarity of those social trends with other European regions. Rich in historical details and refined by good analytical work of some contributors, the book fulfilled the task, which the editors raised for themselves: to inspire further research and to work on preparing background for interregional and international comparison.