

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE MĚCÉNAT AND THE CULTURE OF PUBLIC DONATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE, 19TH–20TH CENTURY

Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Josef, Marie a Zdeňka Hlávkový Foundation (Prague)

Date: May 27-28, 2008.

Location: Vila Lanna, V sadech 1, Prague 6, Czech Republic.

Organizers: Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and Foundation Josefa, Marie a Zdeňky Hlávkových Foundation

Deadline for Applications: December 31, 2007.

Languages: English, German.

Organizers welcome contributions from all disciplines relevant to the topic (history, sociology, social and cultural anthropology, literature, visual arts etc.).

The collection of papers will subsequently be published in a special volume.

Contact: Svatava Raková (rakova@hiu.cas.cz) – Director, Institute of History; Milan Hlavacka (hlavacka@hiu.cas.cz) – Director – 19th Century Department, Institute of History; Jana Růžičková (ruzickova@hiu.cas.cz) – Conference Secretary

The successful businessman and architect Josef Hlávka (+ 1908) has been traditionally regarded as a pioneer of philanthropy in the Czech lands. During his lifetime, Hlávka engaged in a complex but successful »politics of public donations« in the service of political, economic and cultural interests of the Czech national movement. A centenary of his death presents an opportunity to discuss and reassess the phenomenon of philanthropy and the culture of public donations in the Czech lands and Central Europe in a new perspective.

Until now, scholars tended to focus on simple descriptions of individual philanthropic activities (e.g. »Hlávka and his foundation«). One of the aims of our conference is to define a new approach to the topic: one that would situate the culture of public donations and philanthropy in Central Europe within the wider social context of its time (the growth of social mobility, public activities and organizations, the birth of critical public, etc.). It should become more evident that philanthropy was not limited to a single social class or a respective national movement, but rather represented a more universal phenomenon, one that reflected a wide range of contemporary social, cultural, economic and political trends and developments.

Some of the possible topics include:

1. How did collective and individual philanthropy functioned in the service of nationalist agenda (shaping a positive national image etc.) within respective national movements?
2. What forms of communication strategies were used (lobbyism, obligations to the philanthropist, relationship between applicants and philanthropists as reflected in correspondence etc.)?
3. How was the economic, cultural and symbolic capital of the philanthropist accumulated?
4. Special / common traits and characteristics of individual / regional / national philanthropists.
4. Myths created around individual philanthropists.