

Abstract

The objective of my work is to describe associational life in the town of Louny since 1861 to 1914. The years correspond with the year of “October Diploma” issue (1861), resp. the outbreak of World War I. (1914). In the first passages I tried to show the development of the town in the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century from the urbanistic, demographical, industrial and political point of view. All these aspects influenced the associational life there. After the outline of the development of the associational life within the monarchy I aimed at it in Louny. I introduced various types of active notable local personalities in the profiles of Josef Havránek, the representative of the beginning of associational life; long-standing mayor Dr. Petr Hilbert, the owner of the local spa Josef Krýzl and extraordinary socially active woman Mrs Kristýna Ehrlichová. Then I aimed at associational activities in the town. I divided many of the societies into subchapters according to the prevailing orientation: choral dramatic and educational societies, walking and hiking, sport, womens’ groups, Jewish associations and amusement societies. Associational life in Louny was influenced by its geographical position, at the Czech-German linguistic border. The town became the hub of allegiance to Czech customs and aspirations. These societies, associations and groups supported Czech minorities in the surroundings mostly German villages. The narrow interconnection of the associational life and municipal policy became the important feature of that period. Leading political representatives always belonged to the most active personalities of the associational life. They held posts of chairmen and secretaries in many of the societies and in this way they helped to increase their prestige. Certainly, such societies had benefits in the form of getting more money from the town funds. I believe that this work will contribute, within the comparison with other similar towns, to deeper knowledge of associational life in Bohemia because the principles of its working in the towns of similar size are analogous.