

EDITORIAL

The journal *Human Affairs* can be considered one of the “children of the Velvet Revolution” of 1989 in the domain of the humanities and social sciences in Slovakia. It was established by a group of leading Slovak scholars from the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1990, after the political breakdown of the former Communist regime. This event, naturally, opened up new vistas for intellectuals and scientific workers in this country. One of these has been the opportunity to enter into open intellectual and scientific communication on an international level, and, in particular, with colleagues in Western countries. Thus the idea of a journal published in English (twice a year) and devoted specifically to “human affairs” has been put into practice. Here, this is the proper place to acknowledge the initiative and the work of all of those colleagues who came up with such a great idea and who have contributed to its implementation. Special acknowledgement is due to Dr. Viktor Krupa, the Editor-in-Chief, and Dr. Jozef Genzor, the Associate and Managing Editor, under whose editorship the journal has been successfully accomplishing its mission thus far.

During the first decade or so of its existence, the journal *Human Affairs* has primarily served the purpose of presenting in English translation the works of Slovak scholars from a wide range of areas in the humanities and social sciences to make these works available to our international colleagues and thus to show a picture of current scholarly thinking and research on “human affairs” in this country. Many valuable papers and articles from philosophy, psychology, sociology and other disciplines have been published including those from history and ethnology which have provided competent information about past and present events and realities in Slovakia. In addition to these publications, several papers written by invited foreign scholars have also appeared in our journal. Readers may gather basic information about the content of volumes published between 1990 and 2001 from abstracts available on our website www.humanaffairs.sk. (Some volumes to be completed yet.) We are also working on the idea of publishing a special “representative” volume (either in a standard paper form or an electronic one), which would include a selection of the most interesting papers published in our journal in the past decade.

However, the time for another change has come. The original mission of the journal has been fulfilled and should now be renewed and enlarged. A new editorial board has been created, new sponsors involved, new ideas and projects scrutinized. We shall briefly outline below a vision of what type of journal we imagine producing within the next decade.

The internal and external contexts of work in the humanities and social sciences in Slovakia have changed to the extent that we now feel prepared to become a part of international community of scientific workers in these fields. We feel the need to create the possibility for an international scholarly dialogue on “human affairs” in the widest possible sense and provide a forum for the widest exchange of ideas, theories, research re-

sults etc. in our journal, regardless of nationality, country of origin, race or sex orientation. Moreover, the framework of *Human Affairs* has always been interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary. Now we wish to move even further and to label our efforts as “postdisciplinary”. What does this mean? Of course, not the reduction or devaluation of standard scholarly and scientific criteria for publications, such as peer review, originality of papers, etc. However, the conception of science and research itself is currently in transition and we wish our journal to be not only competent but also widely read and influential. We think that rather than being bound to one particular academic discipline the issues we deal with in the contemporary world in humanities and social sciences are complex, demanding unrestricted, creative and open multifaceted approaches. Thus the term “postdisciplinarity” means that *Human Affairs* is not a journal of any one specific discipline within the humanities and social sciences or of any special school of thought or a paradigm within them. But rather the journal is open to all traditional disciplines which do not focus exclusively on discipline’s specific issues. Postdisciplinarity in our understanding does not mean that the traditional disciplines have disappeared or indeed should disappear, but rather that they are changing and should change in order to solve complex issues of human affairs. It is not sufficient to approach such complex issues from any single discipline. We wish to create a space for such contributions in our journal, which may not be considered ‘appropriate’ in any traditional journal of philosophy, sociology, psychology, history, etc. Thus the specific discipline that authors come from will not be important; what will be important is that all authors contribute to the solution of a particular human problem. We invite all nontraditional, innovative, complex and postdisciplinary contributions without any restriction to any discipline (but, of course, we shall look out for and exclude any sort of charlatanism and obscurantism).

There are many issues of “human affairs” in the contemporary world which we would like to devote space to in the journal in order to encourage reflection and inquiry. There are the “big questions” and crucial problems such as the quality of life, the meaning of life, issues of cultural identity, sexuality, poverty, communication, gender, co-operation, peace, values, love, friendship, media, technology, humanism, human settlements, globalization, environment, the human genome, evolution, human nature, human action, tradition, freedom, equality, justice, criticism, poetry, literature, postmodernism, science, death and dying, terrorism, etc. We would like to encourage and welcome innovative contributions that either do not belong strictly to any of the traditional discipline in the humanities and social sciences, or that consciously and coherently combine facts, ideas and knowledge from several fields. We plan to dedicate each issue of *Human Affairs* starting from 2003 to one of the “big issues” and to invite international scholars to contribute to its exploration and analysis as well as to possible solutions and understandings. Thus each issue would become a “forum” and a small “monograph” providing readers with a perspective on a specific human affair as seen by contemporary scholars from various fields of the humanities and social sciences.

We are well aware of the ambitious nature of our project but we are sure that it is a worthwhile endeavour.

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