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Article Summary: It is difficult to find and interpret information in official Habsburg government documents and other nineteenth-century printed sources. Even when that information is available, historians cannot necessarily distinguish among political, economic and personal motives for emigration.

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Names: Vojta Náprstek, Gustav Haberman, Tomáš Estrada Palma, August Geringer, Karel Jonás, František Zdrůbek, Karel Jonáš, Antonio Maceo

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Photographs / Images: fig 15: Telč, a town in western Moravia from which many American immigrants came; fig 16: outdoor practice on the parallel bars at the old Sokol Omaha Hall, 1912; fig 17: rare manuscript music of Matěj Krejčík used by the family band at Pishelville in Knox County; fig 18: Austro-Hungarian passport of Franz Bauer, Smichov, Bohemia, who became a Saline County settler; fig 19: Holašovice, a farming village in Bohemia; fig 20: Vojta Náprstek; fig 21: "Liberty vs Despotism," cover image by August Petřtyl for a 1915 issue of *Hospodář*; fig 22: cover image of Jan Rosický's publication *Jak je v America*, written to help immigrants adapt to life in America

PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF CZECH IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By Josef Opatrný

A review of the historical literature on Czech emigration, or more precisely emigration from the Czech (or Bohemian) crownlands of Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia, shows clearly that, despite obstacles erected by the late Czechoslovak Communist régime, Czech and Slovak historians of emigration devoted most of their attention to immigrants in the United States.¹ That they did so doubtless reflects that nineteenth century Czechs and Slovaks, like other Europeans and perhaps the rest of the world, believed the United States offered the especially attractive combination of an exotic destination and many opportunities to try to realize dreams of a better life, especially one of political freedom and economic prosperity. From the middle of the nineteenth century, such a view was shared not only by politicians, journalists, and various experts on the possibilities of emigration, but also by the public. Interest in America grew especially from the 1860s, when the Homestead Act and the immigration treaty between the United States and Austria-Hungary opened the door to mass emigration, in spite of the Habsburgs' subsequent attempts to impose limitations on this process (fig. 92).

Tens of thousands of people of central European origin in New York, St. Louis, Chicago, Texas, and Nebraska kept in touch with the friends

and relatives they left behind. In Prague, Tábor, Jihlava, Broumov, and dozens of other towns in Bohemia and Moravia, Czechs quickly became aware of a community of compatriots in faraway America (fig. 15). But highly distorted was their impression that these compatriots had preserved all

American support evoked by Masaryk's campaign for Czechoslovak independence during the First World War. At the same time, a series of publications about the history of Czechs in America began to appear, with heavy emphasis on the emigrants' having maintained close links with their homeland through



Fig.15. *Telč, the beautiful baroque town in the Jihlava District of western Moravia, from which came many American immigrants. (D. Murphy, NSHS)*

features of traditional Czech society—a view propagated in Czech-language American publications by the most nationally conscious Czech immigrants and then duly cited in the Bohemian and Moravian press. This impression continued to predominate after 1918, thanks in part to the active Czech-

two generations while perpetuating an old Czech heritage in a brand new land.²

Despite many differences between Czech communities in the New World and Czech society in the Bohemian lands, and however clear these differences were to many of the emigrants and returnees in the nineteenth century,

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the authors of the above works chose to emphasize the efforts of their countrymen in America to preserve the life and customs of the Old Country (fig. 17).³ Many of the same authors expressed regret over the Americanization of Czech emigrants, especially those authors who were Catholics and believed this process to be one consequence of religious indifference.⁴ All of these tendencies continued to develop after the Second World War and especially after the Communist coup of 1948.

During the forty-one years of Communist Czechoslovakia, historians and other scholars interested in emigration studies came to focus on social questions after some vacillation and as a consequence of the oppressive political climate. Most scholarly publications of this period emphasized the economic motivation of emigrants.⁵ Marxist-Leninist historians and ethnographers routinely maintained that Czechs who emigrated, especially to America, gained no relief from poverty, but only a loss of national identity imposed by the harsh material and cultural realities prevailing in the United States. This was especially thought to have been the

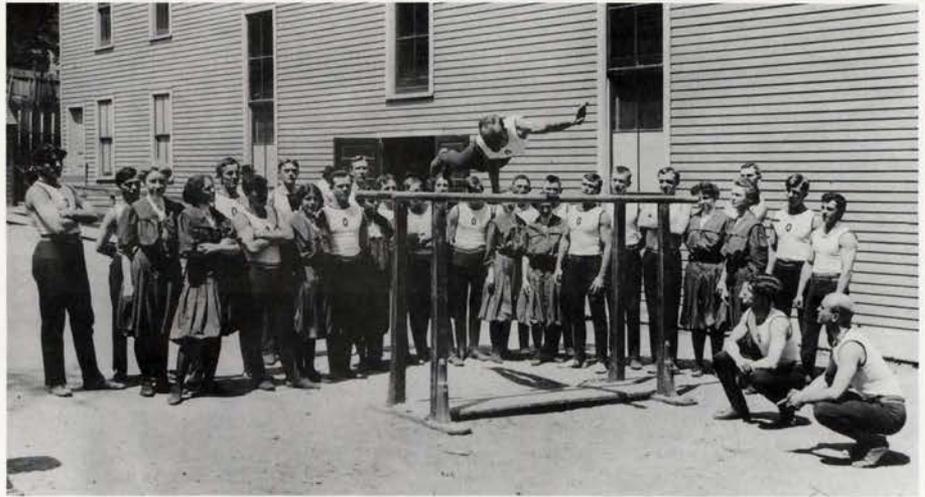


Fig. 16. *Ethnic persistence. Outdoor practice on the parallel bars at the old Sokol Omaha Hall, 1912. (Courtesy Bostwick-Frohardt Collection, owned by KMTV and on permanent loan to the Western Heritage Museum, Omaha)*

case during the greatest wave of emigration around the end of the century. In the view of historians writing from a Leninist perspective, the crest of this wave coincided with the advent of imperialism, according to Lenin the most mature stage of capitalism, wherein the economic, political, and nationalist influence of bourgeois ruling classes reached its height.

American work on immigration was

of course free of such tendentiousness,⁶ as were a few of the studies published in Czechoslovakia.⁷ American or Czech-American authors continued to concentrate on what we might call "ethnic persistence," the ongoing preservation of Old World characteristics of the immigrant community (fig. 16). These authors studied community life, the ethnic press, churches, and secular organizations, and achieved some



Fig. 17. *Czech cultural life and traditional customs were preserved in many forms. Rare manuscript music of Matěj Krejčík, used by the family band at Pishelville in Knox County, Nebraska. (Courtesy Marvin and Winona Krejčik, Verdigre, Nebraska; NSHS C998.1-597)*

notable results. But they often overlooked a crucial chapter in the history of their forebears: their integration into American life and the evolution of their political and religious views, moral values, and lifestyles.⁸ This occurred not simply because many of these scholars, like their predecessors, deplored Americanization: in general, ethnic studies in the United States in recent decades have tended to stress the uniqueness of various ethnic groups rather than their absorption into the American mainstream.⁹

From this we may draw our first conclusion: despite the considerable work of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic and voluminous files of newspapers, pamphlets, photographs, and other archival materials, present-day scholars are confronted with a series of neglected questions, which may be studied with the help of ample sources that have not yet been tapped.

At the same time, scholars will have to grapple with a continuing problem: until 1918 the Czech lands, like Slovakia, formed part of Austria-Hungary and included various linguistic groups.¹⁰ A related difficulty is that governmental authorities in the new countries to which emigrants came, whether the United States or the Latin American republics, invariably identified Czech newcomers as "Austrian" or "Austro-Hungarian," without regard for their true national identity. Like most western Europeans, they considered "state" and "nation" to be identical. Even when the immigrants identified themselves as having come from the Czech—or Bohemian—lands, there remains the problem of determining whether they were Czechs or Germans, both of whom in the second half of the century were concentrated in regions of Bohemia and Moravia out of which came heavy emigration (fig. 18).

Such voluntary identification of origin according to home territory was not infrequent, for a certain "land

patriotism" or feeling of belonging to the Kingdom of Bohemia persisted among Czechs as well as Germans throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, though with an increasing emphasis on nationality defined in a linguistic and cultural sense. Nor can national identity be determined merely by names or the form in which they appear in the documents of the receiving country. A Czech name might be written phonetically in German, or an individual might modify it for easier use in a new land. Moreover a Czech or German name in itself can never be taken as proof of nationality. Answering this question requires other kinds of documentation, such as extensive personal correspondence or the membership lists of ethnic organizations.

Similar problems are also evident, of course, in documentation from the Old Country, a good part of which emanated from the Habsburg Monarchy's central offices in Vienna. However, for the second half of the nineteenth century, a large quantity of material is maintained by archives in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Examples are documents in the State Central Archive in Prague, including records of the Bohemian civil administration or Gubernium, where much information is to be found, especially in the series *Publica*. During the first half of the nineteenth century, emigration came within the purview of the government of the Bohemian lands, the Gubernium Presidium, whose documents are in the series called the Privy Register of the Presidium, which includes a section on emigration.

Beginning in the 1850s, Habsburg officials deposited many documents with the central police administration. The corresponding documents for Moravia and Silesia are to be found in the Moravian Land Archive in Brno, in the collections of the Moravian Gubernium, and the Viceregal Archive, as well as in the Central Police Archive.



Fig. 18. Austro-Hungarian passport of Franz Bauer, Smichov, Bohemia, issued July 21, 1877. Bauer was a farmer and estate foreman before becoming a Saline County, Nebraska, settler. (NSHS Museum 7446-10, C998.1-563)

There are also materials relating to emigration in the archives of the Bohemian regions, now stored at regional centers in Prague, Třeboň, Opava, Litoměřice, Zámorsk, and Pilsen, as well as in the district branch archives of each region, although shifts in district boundaries since the nineteenth century sometimes make it difficult to locate materials. Additional documents may be found in museums of the above-mentioned towns. For example, a large quantity of such material is deposited in the Emigration Archive of the Náprstek Museum in Prague which dates back to the 1850s, when a group of Czechs bent on maintaining close touch with their countrymen in America began to gather a variety of documents—newspapers, magazines, occasional publications of Czech-American organizations, pamphlets and advertisements of agents of transportation companies, memoirs, and corre-

spondence. These documents are indispensable for anyone wishing to make a serious study of emigration from the Bohemian lands.¹¹ In reality our present knowledge of emigration to America is based in large part on materials in the Náprstek Museum (fig. 28).

Pioneer scholars of emigration distinguished between the political and the economic motivation of emigrants. Such a distinction may often correspond to reality, although it also brought with it a great deal of overgeneralization and distortion. By this definition, "political" emigrés fled persecution in Europe during times of social upheaval or radicalization of certain social groups. These were periods when ruling elites typically reacted to critics of the status quo by repressing them. The largest waves of emigration provoked in this way occurred after the Revolution of 1848 and again at the end of the 1870s, when the principal target of the Habsburg authorities' wrath was members of the

Socialist Workers' movement.¹²

Economic emigration was caused primarily by changes in the central European economy and social shifts in the towns and countryside (fig. 19). During the first phase, roughly to the end of the 1870s, most emigrants were peasants who despaired of acquiring land along with the social position it conferred, and who generally aspired to earn a living by farming in their new homeland. Later emigrants were increasingly urban craftsmen and workers hoping for better remuneration in the dynamic and technologically sophisticated economy of the United States. Although these later emigrants have been the principal object of interest among Czechoslovak historians and ethnographers during the past forty years,¹³ their fate as individuals remains little known and they have become the subject of an improbable mythology. The more recent as well as the older historical literature has portrayed emigrants as the poorest ele-

ments of urban and rural society, driven across the sea by poverty and hunger. But this view does not correspond to the facts. The poorest among the inhabitants of the Bohemian lands could, of course, leave their native towns or villages, but they were prevented by their very poverty from making the voyage to the New World. Even the expense of transportation to the west European ports of embarkation—first Amsterdam, Antwerp, or Liverpool, later chiefly Bremen and Hamburg—was beyond their means.

Today it is clear that Europeans who emigrated commanded a certain level of financial resources and they were motivated not so much by a wish to escape poverty as by a desire to end the uncertainty of their prospects for economic and social advancement (fig. 90). These emigrants typically came from the middle levels of village society. They were often younger sons of small landholders who could not themselves look forward to inheriting land,



Fig. 19. *Holašovice, a farming village near České Budějovice, Bohemia. (D. Murphy, NSHS)*

which everywhere in Europe conferred social status. Unless they were successful in acquiring property through marriage, they faced the alternatives of social degradation or departure for the city. For them, emigration offered a welcome solution, especially after the Homestead Act offered free land and the possibility of maintaining social position in the United States.

Candidates for emigration possessed some capital in the form of their share of an inheritance. This share was often sufficient to cover the costs of overland transportation in Europe and America as well as the ocean voyage—all arranged on favorable terms by a network of agents operating in central Europe—with enough left over for setting up in the new land. A similar situation prevailed among the earlier urban emigrants, who generally came from families of artisans, professionals, civil servants, and skilled workers. Only toward the end of the century did a system begin to operate, which had prevailed elsewhere in Europe, whereby successful emigrants paid for the passage of their poorer relatives or friends, who otherwise would have had little chance of emigrating.¹⁴

The traditional distinction between political and economic emigrants breaks down when we consider the relatively small number whose motives were mixed. One of the earliest was Vojta Náprstek, who must certainly be counted in the first category, since he was a refugee from the Revolution of 1848 (fig. 20).¹⁵ In Náprstek's view, America offered Czechs the opportunity to acquaint themselves with democracy, to experience life in a differently run society, and after their return home, to use their experience to promote the democratization of life in the Habsburg Monarchy.¹⁶

This vision, or various versions of it, was shared by at least some Czech intellectuals and political activists, who from the 1860s, on the basis of ideas

gained from the press and from hearsay, spent time acquainting themselves with life in the United States.¹⁷ Their motives varied: some sought a way out of personal difficulties or social dissatisfaction, or they were attracted by the quest for knowledge; but they were connected to the political emigrants in at least two ways.



Fig. 20. Vojta Náprstek. (Courtesy Náprstek muzeum, Prague)

The first was their intention to emigrate temporarily and their ability to publicize their thoughts about America, both in the United States and also at home. Thus this segment of the emigration contributed markedly to the understanding of emigration acquired generally by Bohemian and Moravian Czechs. These pioneering Czech emigrants were also the most active elements in the formation of Czech-American society through their founding of organizations and their journalistic and literary activity. They were chiefly intellectuals, professionals, and skilled workers or craftsmen. They arrived in the United States with certain preconceptions, some of which conflicted with perceived realities. After making first-hand observations of slavery, of the treatment of American

Indians, or of the appearance of working-class slums in east coast cities, indiscriminating enthusiasts sometimes became intractable critics of America.

Such criticism appeared especially during the 1880s and 1890s among socialist emigrants, who in their writings usually drew a sharp distinction between "the Americans" and themselves.¹⁸ This brings us to the problem of the immigrants' incorporation into American society. Some of them did not succeed at all in making this transition, and they sought ways of returning home.

Scholars have largely neglected the question of "re-emigration" because, in spite of the substantial attractive possibilities offered by the subject, the methodological problems are enormous. Most mentions of returnees that turn up in immigration literature concern people who never intended to make more than a temporary sojourn in the United States. But there are also scattered indications of returning immigrants whose original intention was to remain permanently in America.¹⁹ By studying these examples of returnees we might discover just who rejected the American style of life, why they returned, and perhaps even gain some indication of what proportion of immigrants eventually came to such a decision. Such information would increase our understanding of emigration generally, but the difficulties of obtaining it are far greater than those associated with trying to answer traditional questions.

It is, perhaps, indicative that the critics among the immigrants themselves assumed some of the characteristics of the society whose failings they so assiduously pointed out. The most obvious is their use of the Czech-language press to disseminate their views. Archival materials show that in the second half of the nineteenth century dozens of Czech newspapers and periodicals appeared with varying

frequency and circulation.²⁰ After 1860, when František Kořízek began to publish his *Slowan americký* (American Slav), Czech-language newspapers appeared in various towns and cities to acquaint Czech immigrants with the wider American society.²¹ Reading some of these newspapers reveals the gradual identification of their editors and readers with the prevailing outlook and value system in their new homeland.

This change was especially striking at the end of the 1890s, when the Czech-American press adopted a clear and united stand on the principal foreign policy problem which occupied the attention of the entire country: the Spanish-American War. The process by which this occurred may be determined partly from editorials and news reports and partly through letters to the editors.

The Spanish-American War and the events leading up to it have traditionally been called the "War of the Correspondents."²² American public opinion is alleged to have been heavily influenced by the views of journalists, however little these views may have been based on facts. Astonishingly, no one has yet noticed the role of this war in forming public opinion among immigrant communities, whose spokesmen were obliged to adopt a clear and unequivocal viewpoint on the issue in the heat of the moment. As early as 1895, when the events leading to the Spanish-American War were well under way, part of the Czech-American public supported the position taken by most of the American press. This position favored Cuban independence by appealing to the Monroe Doctrine, with copious reference to the need to defend democratic and republican principles, whose advocates in Cuba were then fighting against Spanish monarchism and imperialism.

This struggle between freedom and tyranny took on other dimensions in the

Czech-American press. One of these appeared before 1898, when some Czech newspapers began to consider offering help to the Cubans in their struggle, and not only as a means of implementing ideals propagated by the United States. Declarations and arguments by Czech-American journalists also contained references to the Czechs' historical experience with Spanish Catholicism. Thus one of the traditions of the Old Country reinforced the process of identification with the new homeland. That loyalty to American democratic ideals and representative government coincided with sympathy with the Czech national movement in the Bohemian lands is evident in suggestions by the Czech-American press that the Cubans' rebellion against Spain constituted both a struggle for liberty and a resistance to national persecution. Such critics of Madrid's high-handed rule in Cuba drew parallels between the situation of the Cubans and that of the Czechs in Austria-Hungary. Sometime in 1897 a play entitled *Čechové na pomoc Kubáncům* ("Czechs to the Aid of the Cubans") appeared in Chicago. In the play Cuban national hero Antonio Maceo, well covered in both the English and Czech-language newspapers, invited Czech volunteers offering their services for the cause of Cuban independence to join in the wider struggle for national liberation.

The identification of some Czech-Americans with the ideals of American society and American public opinion reached such an extent in the second half of the 1890s that hundreds of Czech immigrants, like thousands of Americans, expressed interest in joining Cuban insurgent units and eventually joined the U.S. Army. In 1896 the Cuban cause was taken up by Gustav Haberman, an immigrant Czech socialist leader, whose interest in the Cuban problem was evidently aroused by the campaign in the press.²³ He got in

touch directly with the Cuban junta in New York, whose representative, Tomás Estrada Palma, responded to Haberman's offer of help for the Cubans "with rifle and pen" by providing detailed directions for landing on the island. Although Palma specifically warned Haberman against attempting a summer voyage, especially in view of the danger of tropical disease in Caribbean latitudes, Haberman left for the South with one of his countrymen. Before they were able to depart from American soil, both had contracted malaria.

At the beginning of 1897 they were back in Chicago, where Haberman gave an interview to the *Chicago Times* about his journey and about his plans to join the Cuban army. The newspaper quoted Haberman as having extended an open invitation to all citizens to join a volunteer unit to be raised in Chicago; in the following days hundreds of men—Czechs, Poles, and Scandinavians—reported to "Colonel Haberman," ready to go to war against Spain. Among them were spokesmen for groups whose motives varied as widely as those of American society. One of them declared that he and his comrades had been "without work for a long time, and in the continuing industrial crisis there is little hope of finding anything soon."²⁴ He inquired whether the volunteers might expect, after their victory had been won, to receive some land in Cuba. Of course, many Americans also volunteered for the insurgent Cuban contingents out of similar motives; their obvious economic motivation in no way distinguished the Czech immigrants from the mainstream.

In the spring of 1897, a more or less organized group of these volunteers composed of "workers, lawyers, doctors, editors and craftsmen" formed around Haberman and Lajoš Farský.²⁵ They met at a Chicago tavern belonging to the Czech immigrant Semerák, and offered their services to one of the

numerous Cuban juntas that had sprung up in the United States. These Cuban organizations were then more in need of financial support for arms purchases than manpower. But the spokesman for independent Cuba in Chicago solemnly presented Haberman's group with a Cuban flag, thanked the American Czechs for their willingness to go to Cuba, and announced that "in case of need the Czechs shall surely be asked for their help."²⁶

At this time part of the Czech press had not yet joined the openly pro-war agitation. The most important such publications were controlled by August Geringer, who since the mid-1870s had been a leading figure in the Chicago Czech community, which was steadily being assimilated into American society. Geringer's *Svornost* (Concord) had become the most widely read newspaper among Czech immigrants. Its great circulation, together with that of other newspapers, magazines, and almanacs published by his company, made him the leading influence on Czech-American public opinion. His publications, of course, reported on events in Cuba and roundly condemned Spanish colonial policy. But, like much of the American press representing the interests of industrial and financial circles, he took a dim view of the idea of American intervention. As late as February 1898 Geringer's *Amerikán*, whose very name was indicative of its patriotism, was still urging caution and, in contrast to Hearst's pro-interventionist papers, admitted the possibility that the explosion on the battleship *Maine* at Havana might have been caused by an accident on board.

However, in the course of a month Geringer's papers made an about-face, and by April they were advocating an interventionist policy toward Cuba. This advocacy reached its peak on April 28, with a full-page editorial in *Amerikán* in which war between the United States and Spain was character-

ized as a war of liberation against "tyrannical oppression." The author also reminded his readers of the bloody legacy of Spanish Catholicism and made a direct reference to Spain's support of the Austrian Habsburgs in their victory over the Czechs at the battle of White Mountain in 1620 (fig. 2).²⁷ The same issue carried a report on a gathering in Chicago of Czech volunteers, who proposed to form an independent unit in order to offer their services to the U. S. Army rather than directly to the Cuban Republic. During the same months, the Czech Catholic paper, *Národ* (The Nation), also reversed itself and abandoned its openly pro-Spanish editorial policy. Now, with hostilities imminent, it even called for the formation of an independent Czech regiment: "Whoever is not bound by necessity to remain at home should take up arms and march to the struggle in aid of unhappy Cuba."²⁸

The press representing the workers from the more recent wave of immigration took a very different line. Here too, there was no lack of condemnation for the colonial policy of Spain, but the *Dělnické listy* (Workers Journal) sharply opposed the recruitment of Czech immigrants for American volunteer units. The author of an article entitled "The New York Atmosphere and the War Circus" wrote of Czechs volunteering for the army in that city and declared that "aside from leaky shoes and the rags doing service as clothing, one sees nothing but naked bodies with growling stomachs. . . One look at these poor countrymen of ours prompts the question, 'Should you not sooner be defending yourselves against the Americans before they deprive you of everything?'"²⁹ The Czech-American workers' press thereby disassociated itself sharply from the position taken by newspapers appealing to an older generation of immigrants. This was evident not only on the issue of Spanish-American conflict: the workers' papers

also drew a sharp distinction between their readers and "the Americans." They continued to criticize American policy even after the opening of hostilities in Cuba between U. S. and Spanish forces and at a time when some politicians in Washington were advocating American economic control over Cuba and when a few others were even urging its annexation.

During this time the *Amerikán*, while regularly publishing letters from Czech-Americans who had arrived with their units at the scene of the Caribbean conflict, also continued to voice pro-war sentiments in line with the majority of the American press. To a notable extent, articles expressing support for Cuban freedom fighters gave way to considerations of Cuba's economic importance for American trade. Here again, Czech-American newspaper editors appeared to align themselves with mainstream American opinion, although they continued to preserve an awareness of their central European roots and the community of interest between the "New American" and the "Old Country." It was perhaps natural that spokesmen of the Czech-American community should look for links between American interests and those of the Bohemian lands or the Czech nation. In this sense, the Czech-American press, in its position on American policy toward Spain and Cuba, appears to be an important source for tracing the Americanization of Czech immigrants.

Another reflection of the process of assimilation during this period may be seen by comparing public opinion in Bohemia and Moravia toward the Czecho-Slavonic Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague with that of the Czech-American community. The Czech press in Bohemia regarded the exhibition as a manifestation of the strength of the Czech national idea, while the Czech-American community saw it as a chance to advertise in their mother

country the successes achieved in America and to demonstrate continuing support to the Czech national movement in Austria-Hungary. Both groups, like the Habsburg authorities themselves, viewed the exhibition, with its independent section contributed by the American branch of the Czech nation, as an expression of resistance against Vienna.

Differences soon surfaced between the views of Czech nationalists in Bohemia and the Czech-Americans who lived under entirely different political, social, and economic circumstances. While the Czech press in Bohemia anticipated with delight the arrival of the Czech-American contingents, critical voices were raised from the start in the generally enthusiastic Czech-American press. The Habsburg authorities several times intervened directly against the Czech-Americans' declared intention of presenting their former countrymen with some exposure to American society (they planned, for example, a Fourth of July celebration), and many of the visitors were disenchanted when confronted with conditions which they had forgotten about during their years in the United States (fig. 21). Geringer marveled at "how much is erased from one's memory during an absence, and how quickly yearnings and expectations are disappointed. How ecstatic one feels to arrive at the borders of one's native land, and how satiated one becomes after a week, so that visits to places that one has resolved to see once again are hurried through, in order that one might return to the golden freedom of America."³⁰

It is thus clear that in spite of Czech-Americans' having constantly reiterated their interest in events in Bohemia and Moravia, the majority of Czech-Americans rejected the idea held by many political emigrants that the Czech emigration was a temporary sojourn in the United States. Greatly discounted

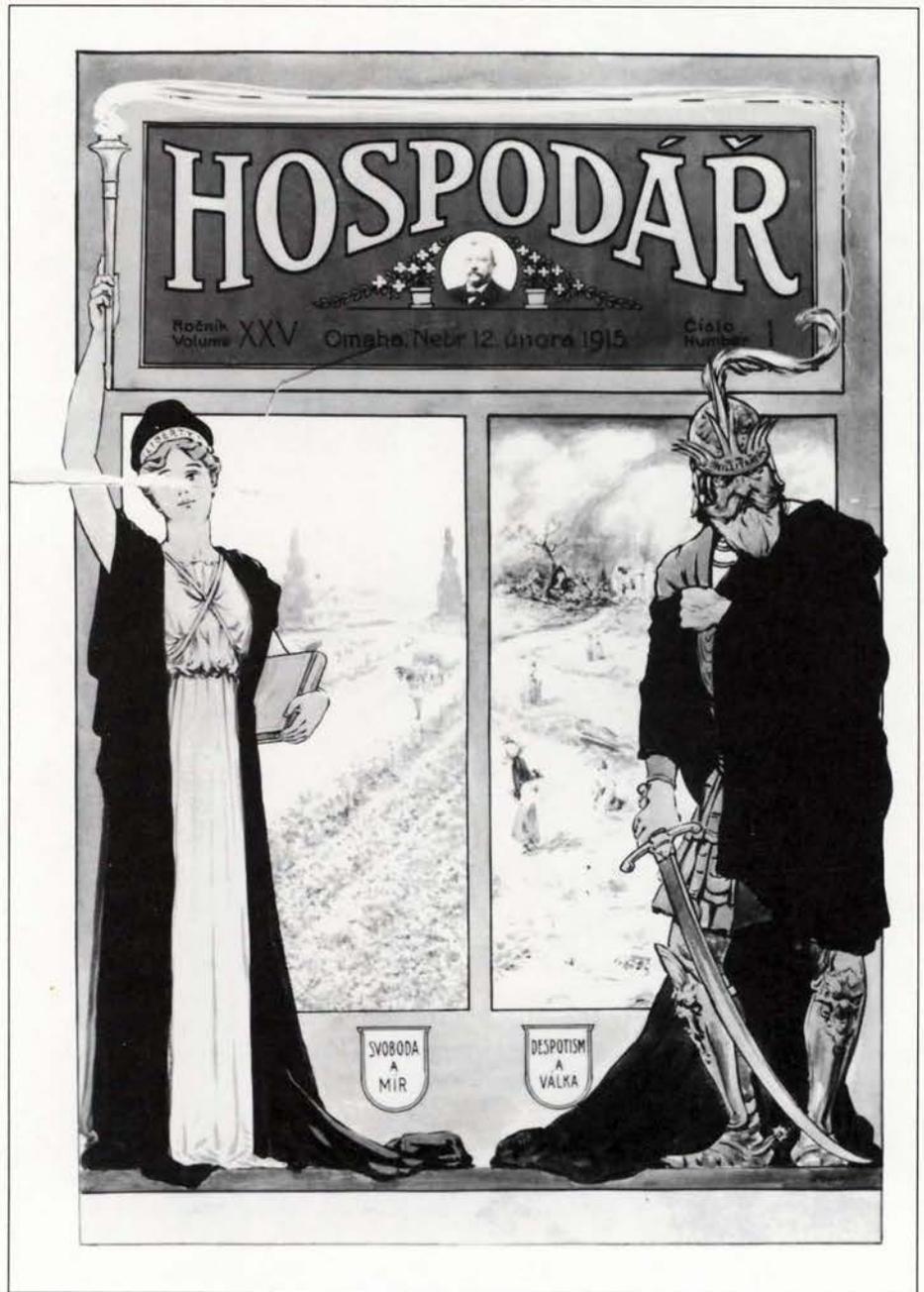


Fig. 21. *Liberty vs Despotism.* From time to time the *Hospodář* reminded Czech-Americans of what they had left behind. The artwork is by August Petryl. (NSHS Museum 638P-12, C998.1-604)

too, was the notion that Czech emigrants would provide extensive material support for the Czech national movement in Bohemia and Moravia. Many of them could not afford to

contribute, while others simply lost interest in what was happening in Europe.³¹

The preservation in America of a consciously Czech community main-

taining contact with conditions in the Old Country was becoming increasingly dependent on the arrival of large numbers of new immigrants from the Czech crownlands. This much was clear at least to some contemporaries. After his return from the United States in the late 1870s, J. V. Sládek declared that a halt to immigration would spell the end of the Czech community in America.³² The European immigrants, with some exceptions, assimilated quickly in America, and even those who were interested in maintaining awareness of their Czech roots contributed by their activity to the Americanization of the new arrivals.

The publishers of newspapers, pamphlets, dictionaries, English textbooks, and other material in Czech taught the new immigrants how to live in their new environment, which differed so greatly from what they were accustomed to (fig. 22). In 1865 Karel Jonáš published his *Tlumač americký* (American Phrasebook), an English textbook for speakers of Czech which, together with a comparable work by František Zdrůbek, was among the most popular grammars both for Czech immigrants and for Czechs still in Bohemia and Moravia who were considering emigration to the United States.³³ Jonáš, whose devotion to his native land cannot be doubted, began his *Tlumač americký* with the phrase "I have money."³⁴ This was, perhaps, symbolic of one way in which he understood his adopted country; it might therefore be useful to examine Jonáš's dictionary and grammar, along with the comparable work of Zdrůbek, from the point of view of content rather than linguistics. What these two "Americans" considered important for newly arrived immigrants is reflected in a vocabulary that seems to have been purposefully selected with an eye to forming these newcomers' ideas about the New World.³⁵

This kind of analysis constitutes a future task for the scholarly study of



Fig. 22. Omaha publisher Jan Rosický wrote *Jak je v Americe?* (*How is it in America?*) to assist immigrant adaptation to life in America. (NSHS Library, C998.1-623)

Czech immigrant society. Emphasis should be placed on the process of this society's integration into the larger American society rather than on the fate of those groups that refused such integration or of the individuals who vacillated. Clearly such a study would be just another aspect of research into the process of the Americanization of people who traveled from the Czech crownlands across the sea to America for the widest variety of reasons and with the most varied conceptions of what they would find. Most of them became Americans with varying degrees of interest in the country of their origin, but living with the daily problems and perspectives of typical citizens of the American Union.

Notes

¹ The pioneering work, which in some respects has not been surpassed, was done by Tomáš Čapek. See especially his *The Čechy (Bohemians) in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920), and *Naše Amerika* (Our America) (Prague: Nár. rady čl., 1926).

Beginning in the 1960s, there was a new wave of interest among Czechoslovak scholars in the history of Czech immigrants in America. See for example the annual *Bulletin Komise pro dějiny krajanů, Čechů a Slováků v zahraničí* (Bulletin of the Commission for the History of Our Compatriots, Czechs and Slovaks, Abroad), vols. 1-6 (Prague: 1963-1969); Josef Polišenký, ed., *Začiatky české a slovenské emigrácie do U.S.A* (The Beginnings of Czech and Slovak Emigration to the U.S.A.) (Bratislava: SAV, 1970); J. Hoffmanová, *Vystěhovalectví z Polné do Severní Ameriky ve druhé polovině XIX. století* (Emigration from Polná to North America in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century) (Havlíčkův Brod: 1969); L. Šatava, *Migrační procesy a české vystěhovalectví 19. století do U.S.A.* (Processes of Migration and Czech Emigration to the U.S.A. in the Nineteenth Century) (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1989).

² Aside from Čapek's books mentioned above, see Stanislav Klíma, *Čechové a Slováci za hranicemi* (Czechs and Slovaks Abroad) (Prague: 1925).

³ See, for example, the pamphlet for prospective emigrants, H.P. Heský, *Přátelské slovo pro americké vystěhovalce* (A Friendly Word for the Emigrant to America) (Prague: 1872).

⁴ This problem is dealt with especially in the extensive work by Jan Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických* (A History of the American Czechs) (St. Louis: Hlas, 1910). On the question of religion see also Bruce Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains, 1871-1914," in *Ethnicity on the Great Plains*, ed. Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 147-69.

⁵ The tendency is dealt with František Kutnar, *Počátky hromadného vystěhovalectví z Čech v období Bachova absolutismu* (The Beginnings of Mass Emigration in the Age of Bach's Absolutism) (Prague: 1964). At the same time it is clear that while economic and social factors were important stimuli for emigration, there were others, which have been treated by a number of authors. In his preface to Frank Halas's memoir, *Český pekař v Americe* (A Czech Baker in America), vol. 1 (Brno: 1931), J. Kudela wrote: "It has been said that our people went abroad out of economic motives. This is true: poverty drove them from many regions of our country where they were unable to feed their children. But this is not the whole truth, for many of our people, especially the young ones, left home out of a yearning to see the world; and some left because they felt conditions in their homeland to be too confining." (p. 5). This question is explored in greater

detail by František Soukup in his *Amerika: řada obrazů amerického života* (Pictures from American Life) Prague: 1912), 254ff. Aside from economic and political causes, he points especially to the importance of the agents of transport companies, who, he contends, were often influential in persuading people to emigrate. Relatively little attention has been devoted to the question of emigrants' wishing to avoid conscription or responding to other political pressures. In this connection, some of the source materials may be misleading: in particular the passport applications which ask the reasons for leaving. In many cases they appear to have been completed with the help of the transport agents with a view to supplying those answers which would assure speedy approval by Habsburg authorities.

⁶ Of works published in the United States, see for example Vera Laska, *The Czechs in America, 1633-1977: A Chronology and Fact Book* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, 1978); Clinton Machann and James W. Mendl, *Krásná Amerika: A Study of the Texas Czechs, 1851-1939* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1983); and Štěpánka Andrews-Koryta, "Dr. Olga Štátný, her Service to Nebraska and the World," *Nebraska History* 68 (Spring 1987): 20-27.

⁷ See for example, L. Šatava, *Migrační procesy*.

⁸ There are of course exceptions, particularly among the more recently published monographs by American scholars on European immigrants in the United States. Many of these monographs are cited by Frederick C. Luebke in this issue of *Nebraska History* in his article on "Czech-American Immigration: Some Historiographical Observations."

⁹ An example is Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (New York: 1971).

¹⁰ On this question see Josef Polišíenský, "Prameny a problémy dějin českého a slovenského vystěhovalectví do Latinské Ameriky" (Sources and Problems in the History of Czech and Slovak Immigrants into Latin America), *Český lid* 68 (1981): 3-8.

¹¹ For the Czech-language press, see the useful index by F. Štědrónský, *Zahraniční krajské noviny, časopisy a kalendáře do roku 1938* (Czech-Language Newspapers, Journals and Almanacs to 1938) (Prague: Národní knihovna, 1958).

¹² Czech socialist emigration of the 1870s and 1880s is discussed at greater length in this issue of *Nebraska History* by Zdeněk Šolle in his article on "Czech Political Refugees in the United States during the Nineteenth Century."

¹³ See V. Mastný, "Statistika vystěhova-

lectví českého proletariátu do Spojených států" (Statistics on the Emigration of the Czech Proletariat to the United States), *Demografie* 4 (1962): 204-11.

¹⁴ That some individuals arrived in America earlier in this way is evident from recent studies by American scholars of European immigrants in the United States. See Luebke, "Czech-American Immigration" in this issue.

¹⁵ On Náprstek, see Renata Tyršová, ed., *Památce Vojty Náprstka* (A Commemoration of Vojta Náprstek) (Prague: 1926).

¹⁶ Tyršová, *Památce*: "Vojta Náprstek: přednáška Julia Zeyra k sedmdesátým jeho narozeninám" (Julius Zeyer's Lecture on the 70th Birthday of Vojta Náprstek), 10ff.

¹⁷ The significance of such American experience for some of the Czech intellectuals is evident in the case of the famous poet J. V. Sládek. See J. Polák, *Americká cesta J. V. Sládka* (The American Journey of J. V. Sládek) (Prague: 1966).

¹⁸ Articles appeared in workers' newspapers of the 1880s and 1890s, for example in *Dělnické listy* published in New York. This approach also appeared later in socialist circles as indicated by F. Soukup, *Amerika*, cited above.

¹⁹ There is no doubt that much of the source material has remained unused or been used for different purposes. I am thinking chiefly of the wealth of materials in the Literary Archive of the National Museum of Literature in Prague, where one can find the papers of prominent Czech literary figures, many of whom either went to the United States or maintained contacts there. An example is Jakub Arbes, who at one time considered emigrating. See Jaroslava Janáčková, *Jakub Arbes, Novinář* (Journalist) (Prague: 1987), 46ff. Arbes's papers contain many letters from America.

²⁰ See F. Štědrónský, *Zahraniční krajské noviny*.

²¹ On journalism as a characteristic of American society see, for example, J. C. Furnas, *The Americans. A Social History of the United States 1587-1914* (New York: 1969), 556ff.

²² See Charles H. Brown, *The Correspondents' War* (New York: 1967).

²³ See Gustav Haberman, *Z mého života* (From my Life), 2d ed. (Prague: 1924).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 296.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 299. Farský arrived in Cuba in 1898 as a volunteer in the American army. See Josef Opatrný, "Los checos y esclavos

en los EE. UU. y la guerra contra el colonialismo español en Cuba, 1895-1898" (The Czechs and Slovaks in the United States of America and the War Against Spanish Colonialism in Cuba), *Ibero-Americana Pragensia* 10 (1976): 211-18.

²⁶ Haberman, *Z mého života*, 302.

²⁷ Editorial in *Amerikán*, Apr. 28, 1898, 1.

²⁸ According to *Amerikán*, May 5, 1898, 2.

²⁹ *Dělnické listy*, May 5, 1898, 202.

³⁰ "Z výletu do Čech" (A Journey to Bohemia), *Svornost* 20 (August 1895): 2.

³¹ Many Czech immigrants lived on the edge of poverty and thus were unable to contribute. The Czech-American press also had difficulty raising money. See T. Čapek, *Naše Amerika*.

³² J. V. Sládek, "Ztracené duše" (A Lost Soul), *Americké obrazy* (American pictures) (Prague: 1941), a later edition of a work first published in the late nineteenth century: "The Czech element in America is also dying out. With a little more freedom at home and a little more prosperity, there won't be any more emigrants. Once this happens, no traces of Czech-Americans will remain within a few years."

³³ On Jonáš, see Lumír Nesvadbký and Josef Polišíenský, "První Čech v Americe: Karel Jonáš 1840-1896" (The First Czech in America), *Sborník Národního muzea v Praze, ser. C, Literární Historie* 32 (1987). Jonáš's *Tlumač americký* appeared in a number of editions into the twentieth century. František J. Zdrůbek, *Česko-anglický tlumač pro Čechy Americké* (Czech-English Phrasebook for American Czechs) (Chicago: n.d., ca. 1890s).

³⁴ Karel Jonáš, *Nový tlumač americký* (New American Phrasebook), 12th ed. (Racine, Wis.: 1908), 9.

³⁵ See Jonáš, *Nový tlumač americký*, the sections on citizenship papers, 121; and property and housekeeping, 139ff, where Czech immigrants are taught something of the practicalities of everyday American life as well as the English language.