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Bakalářská práce

**Czechs in America: Czech migration to the United
States in the 20th century
(including interviews with Czech emigres carried out
by the author)**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The United States has always been an attractive country that offered great opportunities and freedom. That is why it has been the aim of many emigrants since the very beginning of migration.

As the title indicates, this bachelor thesis deals with the migration of Czechs to the United States of America in the 20th century. It consists of two sections, theoretical and practical. The objective of the theoretical section is to describe the history of migration to the United States, which began in the 16th century, along with the first Czech who settled in the USA. Afterwards, this section briefly describes the reasons that led people to leave their native homeland and start a new life beyond the ocean. Furthermore, in this section, I briefly focus on individual centuries and migration during that time. However, the main topic of the thesis is the 20th century. In this chapter, the waves of migration are to be described. Specifically, the migration before and during the First World War, between World Wars, during the Second World War and finally the post-war period. Attention is also paid to the activities of the compatriot communities and their associations in the United States, whose support and help played a huge role during the World Wars period.

The practical section of the thesis deals with the end of the 20th century and compatriot activities, Czech clubs and the Czech-American press, which is trying to preserve the Czech language and cultural heritage among Czech compatriots in the United States. However, the most important and essential part of the practical section is represented by interviews with Czech emigrants who decided to leave their homeland in the 20th century and go to the United States to start living a better life. The objective of the practical section was to find out what were the main reasons for the emigration to the US and how was the situation at that time and the process of assimilation. The results and summary of these interviews are then presented at the end of the practical section of the thesis.

2 THEORETICAL SECTION

2.1 History of immigration

2.1.1 Migration, emigrants, immigrants

In the introduction, it is necessary to clarify the concept and understanding of certain terminology from the field of migration and its parts [Šatava: 29]. The internet website *International Organization for Migration* (IOM) defines *migration* as „the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border or within a State.“ The term migration includes two other parts and terms. The first is *emigration* which is according to Longman Dictionary [LDOCE] defined as „the process of leaving own country to live permanently in another country.“ So the person who emigrates, i.e. emigrant, is someone who leaves a country or region. On the other hand, *immigration* is „a process of entering another country in order to live there permanently“ [ibid.]. In that case, an *immigrant* is a person who comes into a new country. The same person can be both immigrant or emigrant. It depends on how the word is used.

Although the migration during the 20th century is the main topic of this thesis, it is important to state the history of migration and other circumstances. The United States of America has always been the target of many immigrants. This distant country has been attracting people not only because of its economic situation and a promise of cheap land but also because of the desire for freedom and democracy [Dubovický 2003: 8].

It is stated that the years of 1854-1857, 1867-1873, 1891-1894, 1903-1908 and 1911-1914 are considered to be the peaks of Czech migration to the United States. The number of people who decided to leave their native country and went to seek a better life in the United States was, until the World War, considerably high [Kořalka: 36-38].

As it was mentioned above, since the mid-19th century, the United States has been the target for emigrants not only from the Czech Republic but also from across Europe. Just at the very beginning of World War I, nearly 25 million

people from Europe set out for a journey to find a better life overseas. [Tindall: 816-818] As well as in the other countries, those who had enough money to travel and start their new life could move out to America. But the funds were not the only thing that prevented Czechs from leaving their country. A large obstacle was also a long distance and large water areas [Šatava: 30].

In general, Martínek [1936: 6] divides three generations of immigrants. The first generation is understood to be compatriots who were born in Czechoslovakia and whose mother tongue is Czech. Their descendants are already considered to be Americans and they are referred to as the second and third generation of immigrants [ibid.].

2.1.2 Reasons for emigration

There were several reasons for leaving their beloved native country. First of all, it was the economic situation. This reason was common mostly in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century [Salaba Vojan 1911: 45]. It involved particularly poor people who left their country with the vision of a better life overseas. Especially for labourers or workers, the situation was very difficult in their homeland. They were leaving the country and looking for a job in the US [ibid.].

The flyer *American immigrant*¹ described America as a labour country where emigrants could find a very beneficial and well-paid job and where they can freely pursue their business. It also offered low taxes, political and religious freedom, as well as the freedom of speech and equality that could not be found in the immigrants' native countries [Vaculík 2009: 271]. Among other things, we can also consider the desire for wealth as the economic reasons for emigrating. It started with the discovery of gold. This gold rush broke out on January 19th, 1848 when James W. Marshall discovered gold in Coloma, California. This

¹In Czech language - Americký přistěhovalec.

attracted many people to the US, not only from the whole world but also from the Czech lands. Many of them also remained in the US after [ibid.].

Other reasons for emigration were political reasons. Many people left Czech lands because they could not withstand the political pressure caused by absolutism in Austria that prevailed after the year of 1848. Among other things, some people were leaving as a result of the revolution that happened in the same year. Most of them were prosecuted for their participation in it. These include Vojta Náprstek, Karel Jonáš, and Václav Šnajdr [Pergler 1923: 5]. In the 20th century, we can divide three waves of political migration. The first wave was caused by the Munich Agreement that took place in September 1938 and by Nazi occupation in March 1939. The second wave of political migration occurred after the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in the year of 1948. Finally, the third wave took place after 1968. Mostly, journalists, writers and professors left the Republic because of the oppressive regime in Czechoslovakia [Jaklová 2010: 28].

In some cases, people also left their homeland for personal reasons. Because of family conflicts, financial problems, etc. We cannot forget to mention also religious reasons, however, they were less common among those already mentioned [Korytová-Magstadt 2010: 15]. Jaklová [2010: 27] also states that religious migration was represented by two waves. The first one took place in 1548 and the second one in 1620 after the Battle of White Mountain.² Another reason for leaving the country was simply just a desire for adventure and knowledge of the New World [Hájková 2011: 8].

Another attraction to the New World was a correspondence between those living in America and their families back home. „Pioneers“ tried to lure other family members, relatives, and friends to follow them to the United States.

²The Battle of White Mountain ended in defeat in 1620 and many noble and middle-class families left because of fear of the consequences due to their participation in uprisings [Jaklová 2010: 27].

In those letters, they were writing about better work opportunities and other positive elements of life in America [Korytová-Magstadt 2010: 15].

2.1.3 Requirements for emigration

Since the late 1960s, emigrating to the US became a lot easier for Czechs. On December 21, 1876, the December Constitution³ introduced the right of an individual to move freely to a foreign country. It was possible to travel both with a passport that was issued for 2-3 years or to the labour book⁴ [Hájková: 8]. As we already mentioned above the flyer called *American immigrant*, which was published in Hamburg, provided useful advice on transportation to the US and also on accommodation. Before the departure from the homeland, people had to sell all their property and take with them only clothing, shoes and money. Another useful advice was to take the addresses of relatives or friends that were already living in America. It was not recommended to bring a lot of cash. More preferable was the note that was payable after their arrival in America [Vaculík 2009: 270].

However, not everyone was lucky enough to emigrate. According to Polišínský [1992: 25], people who were not accepted by US authorities had to be excluded from transport. These were people who were invalids or incapable of securing themselves. Also, criminals, widows, and women with children without men and persons over 60 years of age were excluded from transport. [Polišínský 1992: 25].

2.1.4 Transportation to the US

In 1900, the Cleveland overseas ship, that belonged to Hamburg-America Linie, was launched. Already at that time, a large number of Czech emigrants got the chance to use this ship on their journey to the US [Hájková 2011: 9]. After their

³Also known as „the Austro-Hungarian Constitution“ was according to Mutschlechner „was passed by Franz Joseph and defined fundamental civic rights, the exercise of governmental and executive power together with judicial power, and provided for the establishment of a supreme court of the empire“ [Mutschlechner].

⁴ In Czech language „pracovní knížka“, was used for the evidence of labor movement and its control. [Vojenský historický ústav Praha].

arrival in the American land, they had to go through a long procedure at the port. As the most used gateways to the US served ports in New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, Charleston, and Galveston. The Castle Garden port in New York through which many of the first Czech emigrants got to the US, had been operating since 1855 [Vaculík 2009: 269-270]. Later in 1892, this port station was for capacitive reasons and unsatisfactory conditions replaced by a new one, located on Ellis Island. Over 17 million immigrants arrived in the US via this station [Dubovický 2003: 18]. It was the first immigration centre that was controlled by the government and the city [O'Callaghan 1990: 77].

Initially, describes that in the very early days of emigration to the US, the time people had to spend on the boat or steamer was approximately 27 to 34 days. With sailing boat then 2 to 3 months [Kutnar 1970: 219]. Dubovický [2003: 17] writes that the food was not provided and people had to take the food for themselves, that would last the whole journey. But sometimes the journey extended for several days and the whole family had to survive without food. In 1848 everything changed and shipping companies were ordered to provide food for passengers. This food usually consisted of potatoes, cabbage, rice, semolina, peas, beans, bread, and butter. The meat was not offered as it rotted in a few weeks. In the morning passengers also received coffee and tea. However, the quality of that food and drinks was not very good. The food was stiff and sometimes even spoiled [ibid.]. Passengers often became ill and spread epidemics because there was a small number of sanitary facilities. The most common was the typhoid fever, emigrants also called it „ship fever“ [Polišenský 1992: 23]. Owners of these shipping boats often transported more people than was the capacity of the boat. The only purpose behind it was to earn more money [Dubovický 2003: 17].

After the arrival in the port, it still was not the end of their journey. Immigrants had to go through a long procedure. Not everyone could pass through the immigration station. People received an identification mark and then they had to undergo a medical examination. If a doctor found certain symptoms of a

disease or disability, he marked the person's right shoulder with chalk. For instance, „X“ was used to designate the mental illness, „G“ was for people with goitre, „L“ was used to identify people with lameness. and this person was sent for further examination. The fortunate ones who passed the medical examination continued to the immigration official who asked them questions about their name, nationality, travel destination, and financial status. Just as it was with the medical examination, if there were any doubts, immigrants were subjected to further investigation. About approximately two per cent was not allowed to enter the United States because they were considered to be criminals, anarchists or they were accused of carrying some dangerous disease, such as tuberculosis or eye infection [Polišenský 1992: 32]. Those who were not admitted to the US had to return back to their country at the expenses of the shipping company [Tindall 1996: 415]. At the beginning of the 1950s, the original boat transportation was replaced by air transport, therefore it was not used any longer [Dubovický 2003: 18].

2.1.5 Settlements after arrival to the US

As Polišenský [1996: 32] describes, the first group of immigrants who came to America headed for settlements, where they could find German settlers. It was really difficult for immigrants from Bohemia and Moravia to adapt to the local climate, which was completely different from the one they knew. There were great temperature differences, tornadoes, winters were too cold and summers were too hot. Under often very unfavourable conditions, they had to build their new homes, such as wooden hovels that they managed to make of felled trees. The floor was made of loam and in the middle of the „room“ was a fireplace that was used for cooking. Furthermore, they did not have enough agricultural tools for work and they often had to make them out of wood [ibid.].

According to Dubovický [2003: 18], usually, people who searched for land headed from New York or Baltimore to Cleveland, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin or Chicago, Illinois. From there they would continue to the prairies of Mid-Western states, such as Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa,

Nebraska and Kansas. Sometimes they travelled across the whole United States to California. Other groups of immigrants that arrived in the port of New Orleans, could use cheap transport to St. Luis, Saint Paul and Minneapolis), and then again they continued to prairies. Galveston was also used as an entrance to the United States. People who came to America through this port later spread throughout Texas where they could find a cheap land [ibid.].

3 BEGINNING OF CZECH MIGRATION

3.1 16th century

According to Rechcigl [1993: 101], miners from the town of Jáchymov are considered to be the first Czechs in the New World. They were employees of the banking and trading house of Welser and in the year 1528, they went to the territory of today's Venezuela to start mining silver. But their plan did not materialize and the miners returned home. Another mention of Czech emigration to the USA from the 16th century, specifically from the 3 July 1585, is about the Czech metallurgist Joachim Gans, who along with the Sir Richard Grenville's expedition spent several months in Virginia and North Carolina. Joachim Gans was originally from Prague and he became the first Jew in the territory of the future United States. He is also considered to be the first Czech to visit North America [Rechcigl 1993: 102]. On the North Carolina coast, specifically on the island of Roanoke, he conducted a rock analysis. His aim was to find precious metals⁵ [Dubovický 2003: 9].

Another character that is worth mentioning and who was interested in New World was the Czech humanist Jan Ámos Komenský (1592-1670). He was even offered the position of president of Harvard University, which he subsequently rejected and preferred to go to Sweden [Dubovický 2003: 9].

3.2 17th century and the first Czech in the United States

The first contact with the United States was in the 17th century. It was Augustine Herrman who became the first historically documented Czech on the American land [Zelený 2017: preface]. Augustine came from Prague, but his birth year is not certain. The most likely he was born in 1623. However, some studies mention 1605 or 1608 as the years of his birth. Herrman left his homeland during the Thirty Years' War and went to the Netherlands [Polišenský 1996: 12]. Later, in 1644, he decided to leave Amsterdam and went to America. There he settled in

⁵Due to poor food supply of colonists and threats from Spaniards and Indians, the expedition was recalled and they returned to England [Jaklová 2010: 33].

New Amsterdam (today's New York). He began working as a member of the *Nine Men Council* that belonged to the governor Peter Stuyvesant. Augustine was a land surveyor, draftsman, colonizer and planter, politician and also a diplomat [Jaklová 2010: 33]. Herman was very interested in cartography. Because of that, he made a map of Virginia and Maryland for the Lord of Baltimore in 1670. This map was the very first map of Virginia and Maryland, and thanks to its high-quality adaptation, it was used approximately hundreds years after its release. Because of his merits, especially the creation of the map mentioned above, Augustine was devoted to extensive lands in Maryland, which he later named *the Bohemia Manor* [Dubovický 2003: 10]. Augustines died at the age of 65, at his manor, which is located in the Gulf of Maryland on the banks of the river Bohemia [Zelený 2017: 7].

According to Dubovický, there were other several Czech exiles in America in the 17th century. One of them was Bedřich Filip (1626-1702), also known as Frederick Philipse, who belonged to the family of Protestants that left Bohemia and went to the Netherlands when the Thirty Years War broke out⁶ and subsequently to New York in 1658. Bedřich Filip arrived in the US poor. Even though he was only a qualified carpenter, thanks to his trades, he managed to collect great wealth. To this day, the name of Bedřich Filip is commemorated in the name of the city of Philipsburg, New York [Dubovický 2003: 11; Jaklová 2010: 34].

Polišenský [1996: 13] also states that in 1678, a new way that allowed young men to travel to the New World was discovered. They were members of the Czech province of the Jesuit order. Until the year of 1767 about 140-180 members left the order for Spanish and Portugues overseas possessions where they then worked as missionaries, but also as doctors, pharmacists, economists and builders from southern Chile to California and New Mexico [Binková-Polišenský 1989:].

⁶Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) [HISTORY 2018].

3.3 18th century

3.3.1 Moravian Brethren

At the beginning of the 18th century, approximately 300 members of the Church of Moravian Brethren, that are considered important figures in the history of migration, came to America [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2013]. They were followers of Jan Hus and Jan Ámos Komenský, and they came to America in two waves. Because of religious persecution in Bohemia, they were forced to leave their homeland and escape to Saxony. Then they arrived in America in 1735, led by David Nitsch-Mann⁸ and settled in the territory of English colony in Georgia, specifically in the state of Savannah, from where they then moved to Pennsylvania where they founded the town of Bethlehem in 1742. Pennsylvania then became the main territory of Moravian Brethren [Rozumek 2010]. The next wave then arrived in America, specifically in Philadelphia in 1742, and another group then arrived in 1794 in New York [Jaklová 2010: 35]. According to Polišíenský [1996: 14], the Moravian brethren did not respect slavery and therefore, they often had conflicts with white farmers. They baptized black people and helped them to escape to the north.

Dubovický [2003: 11] also mentions another of the most famous missionaries of the Church of the Moravian Brethren. It was John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder (1743-1823). He was from England, but his father came from Moravia.

⁸He was a carpenter and later in 1735 he became a bishop of the Unity of Brethren [Poodří 2007: 36].

3.4 19th century

3.4.1 The first wave of immigrants

The first Czech immigrants entered the American land in the 17th and 18th centuries. The beginning of Czech immigration to America, however, was not until 1848, when the biggest migration waves began. Initially, the individual migration prevailed, later started to move the whole families. Mass emigration began in the early 1950s and took place mainly along the line Prague – Podmokly – Dresden – Hamburg or Bremen – New York [Vaculík 2009: 269].

The transportation was realized through the sea on regular lines. Mostly farmers predominated in Czech migration to the US. They usually headed to the Midwest United States and Texas. The city of St. Louis (Missouri) became the centre for them. This city also became the first centre of the Czech settlement in the early 1950s. From there, the immigration flow continued to other areas that offered free farmland. These were areas like Iowa, Wisconsin, Texas, Minnesota, Michigan, and Kansas. However, since the 1880s, Czechs began to settle in the cities that included Nebraska, North and South Dakota. They also worked in the textile industry in Chicago (Illinois), in metallurgy in Cleveland (Ohio) and in some cases, women worked as housewives. Other cities in which Czechs settled were New York and Baltimore (Maryland) [Vaculík 2009: 271-272].

3.4.2 Civil War and the Homestead Act of 1862

Migration to the United States continued even after the outbreak of the Civil War⁹ in 1861. Czechs, just like other European immigrants, were opponents of slavery and they supported the Republican Party¹⁰ led by Abraham Lincoln. Many of them then participated in war events [Polišenský 1996: 41]. Polišenský further estimates, based on the available sources (the National Archive's war

⁹American Civil War (1861-1865) – one of the greatest conflicts in American history over the expansion of slavery competition [Ohio History Central].

¹⁰The Republican Party, founded in 1854, is one of two major political parties in the US. This party was against the extension of slavery into Western territories. „Fought to protect the rights of African Americans after the Civil War“ [HISTORY 2019].

documents stored in Washington), that the total number of the participant was 600. Of which two-thirds fought on the Union side¹¹ and remaining one-third on the Confederacy side¹² [ibid.].

During the Civil War in America, President Abraham Lincoln signed so-called „Homestead Act“. As Jason Porterfield [2005] states in his book:

“The Homestead act promised 160 acres (65ha) of free land to any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become one.” [Porterfield 2005: 26-27]

This reality raised a huge interest in Europe and attracted another wave of immigrants [Opatrný 2007].

¹¹The Union (The United States of America, Northern states) – its aim was to abolish slavery [HISTORY 2019].

¹²The Confederacy (Confederate States of America; Southern states) – its aim was to preserve and expand the institution of slavery [Coaston 2018].

4 20TH CENTURY

The 20th century was a significant period not only for America but for the whole of Europe. The migration wave that began right after 1848, due to the political situation and the unsatisfactory economic situation in Austria-Hungary, continued through the first two decades of the 20th century. As Vaculík [2009: 279] states, most Czech emigrants left their homeland in 1907, it was about 13 169 people that left for America. These people were mostly from the districts of Čáslav, Kutná Hora, Blatná, Tábor, Plzeň, Domažlice or Klatovy. In the Moravian region, it was the city of Uherské hradiště, Moravská Ostrava and Fryštát (Karviná) [ibid.].

Following waves of immigrants came in between years 1939-1940. These waves were caused not only by the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia but also as the result of the Communist putsch in 1948 and Soviet invasion in 1968 [Rehcígl 2017: preface]. During the first decade of the 20th century, less than 100 000 Czechs that left at that time, brought approximately 2,8 million dollars with them [Vaculík 2009: 273-277].

4.1 Pre-war period

Before the very beginning of World War I, some of the biggest migration waves to the United States took place. The new immigrants who came to the US after the year 1880 were different from the people that came in the first wave of immigrants. The difference was better education. Since 1860, there were dictionaries and various language manuals, so the new immigrants could learn English easily. They also often applied for US citizenship and enrolled in electoral lists. Because they often differed from other ethnic groups, they were also ranked among the top the most politically aware new American citizens [Polišenský 1996: 73].

According to Polišenský [1996: 74], the number of immigrants from Czech lands and also from Slovakia grew rapidly in the 1890s. America attracted more and more people because it was presented to the Czech people at Prague

exhibitions. The census¹³ of the year 1880 recorded 85 000 Czechs living in the United States at that time. However, the growing number of immigrants did not stop, and right before the beginning of World War I there was about half a million immigrants from both Bohemia and Moravia [Polišenský 1996: 74].

Polišenský [ibid.] further states that after the year 1880 the number of Moravians, who settled mainly in Texas and Nebraska, increased. In 1900, Czechs were to be found throughout the United States, particularly Louisiana, Virginia, Florida, Indiana, North Dakota and Arizona.

In 1910, the census counted 539 390 people of Czech origin, living predominantly in Illinois, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The most populated cities were Chicago, Cleveland, and New York. Chicago was the city with the largest number of Czech dwellings, schools and gymnasia. There were even located three of Czech breweries, four of Czech dailies and weeklies, several printing shops, bookshops, music institutes, a theatre, an orphanage and also cemetery. Later, this city was also the seat of the *Czechoslovak American National Council* (Česko-americká národní rada) and *Czechoslovak American Press Bureau* (Československá americká tisková kancelář) [Vaculík 2009: 277-278].

According to Hájková [2011: 13], at the beginning of the 20th century, Czech compatriots were not pictured in a very good light in American's subconscious. Because of an insufficient number of English-written literature about Czech community, there was sometimes a vague idea about them. Only a few publications were available, such as Tomáš Čapek's book called „Slovaks of Hungary, Slavs and Panslavism“. For this reason, Czech compatriots were given the nickname „*Bohunks*“, which was formed by combining the words Bohemians and Hungarians. Other such names for Czech compatriots included *Bohoes*, *Cheskey*, and *Bootchkey* [ibid.].

¹³Collins dictionary defines „census“ as: „An official survey of the population of a country that is carried out in order to find out how many people live there and to obtain details of such things as people's ages and jobs.“ [Collins 2019]

Czech compatriots very often had to deal with certain prejudices that American society had against them. One reason was the language. Their knowledge of the English language was not very good, mostly almost none. Therefore, they founded urban communities and rural settlements where they attempted to preserve their traditional way of life [Hájková 2011: 14].

Yet many compatriots have quickly managed to adapt to the culture and values of the new country. This offered them better job opportunities and social inclusion. But not everyone has the same opportunity to do that. It depended on the place of residence and also on the profession of the person. The process of assimilation was much faster in the city than in rural settlements [ibid.].

Compatriots who settled in rural areas and agricultural areas were able to maintain their Czech awareness for much longer. Children had been told since their childhood that they are Czechs, and therefore the teenagers were later proud of their origin.

A large number of Czech associations was available to Czech compatriots even before the First World War. For example – supportive, singing, educating, dramatic and entertaining associations. There were a lot of clubs, only in Chicago existed about 500 associations. Supportive associations that served for illness and death, had the most members. Their orientation was rather free-minded or Catholic. The last pre-war year of 1913 recorded 8 031 emigrants [Vaculík 2009: 278-279].

4.1.1 Czech-American press

The press was the main and often the only source of information about events that were happening in the homeland country of Czechs – Czechoslovakia. However, during the World Wars, the press was not only informative source but also educational. It informed compatriots about diseases, ways of gardening, farming and cooking. Another topic that was included was culture, which dealt with Czech history and culture, theatre performances organised by compatriots and also their reviews. Among other things, the letters of readers were also

published in the press. It included common daily news and fears of wars. Sometimes the published letters also included searching for lost people. Another topic that often occurred in the press was advertising [Jaklová 2014: 65].

Furthermore, the press was also an important mean of preserving the Czech compatriot identity. The aim of these compatriot newspapers was mainly to maintain awareness of the reciprocity of the compatriot community and incorporate newcomers in it. However, due to lack of finances, the compatriot press was not sufficiently informed and therefore it was based only on the information translated from German or American newspapers. Only after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the compatriot newspaper got information through the Czechoslovak Press Office [Polách 2017: 43].

Polách [2017: 46] further claims that the period before and after the First World War was considered to be the height of the compatriot press. In 1920 were published 9 dailies, 43 weekly magazines, 6 fortnightly magazines and 31 monthly periodicals. In addition to that, there were newspapers published by various associations. Polách mentions that it included, for example, *Věštník* (The Oracle) or *Orgán* (The Organ). Also *Amerikán*, *Denní hlasatel*, *Duch času*, *Hospodář*, *Slavie a Svornost*“. These printed materials were sent to all members of associations and served as a source of information about past events, changes in laws and payment of policies [ibid.].

In the 20th century, however, the production of newspapers decreased. As a cause, Jaklová [2006: 57] states immigration quotas introduced in the early 1920s, which reduced the number of new immigrants, and thus the number of newspaper readers. Furthermore, the decline was caused also as a result of the deaths of first-generation compatriots, since the press was primarily intended for them. The second and third generations of immigrants were no longer interested in reading the Czech press because many of them did not speak Czech very well, they spoke rather English. Another reason was the economic crisis, which forced many editors to close down their press activity in the late 1920s [ibid.].

4.2 Czechs in America during the First World War

According to Polišíenský [1996: 92], during the war years, the number of Czech immigrants to America diminished. In 1914-1920, less than a 1000 people emigrated to the US. In 1920, the number of Czechs and Slovaks living in the United States was 622 000, that included first generation immigrants only. Then the second generation immigrants were counted for 388 000 people [Polišíenský 1996: 93].

4.2.1 Relief Action during the First World War

Jaklová [2010: 303] states that during the first three years of war, Czech-Americans helped their native country mainly financially and materially. This aid was called *the Relief Action*¹⁴ and it was organized on the basis of a national publicity campaign. The material help of compatriots consisted of sending a large amount of food, clothing, medicines, medical supplies and also ambulance cars to their homeland, as well as to Czech legionnaires, The largest contribution to this help was because of Czechoslovak women, who belonged to association called *Včelky* (Bees) or *Priadky* (Silkworms). These women gathered once a week and they knitted scarves, prepared military foot wraps, field bandages and other equipment that was then sent to soldiers at the front. They continued with this activity even after the end of the war. They helped alleviate the consequences of the post-war situation among compatriots [Korytová-Magstadt 2010: 56]. According to Dubovický [2003: 35], the total value of these financial shipments was 2,000,000 US dollars. According to Martínek [1936: 44], the money was also collected by organizing various social events and activities. For example, collections, theatre performances and so-called bazaars. Martínek also states that the first bazaar was in New York and managed to earn up to 22,000 dollars and then served as a model for all subsequent bazaars. Then in Cleveland was collected 20,000, in Chicago 40,000, in Cedar Rapids 25,000, in Texas 54,000 and in Nebraska up to 70,000 dollars [ibid.].

¹⁴In Czech language – „Pomocná akce“.

Dubovický [2003: 32] further writes that besides financial and material help, however, almost 2 500 Czech and Slovak compatriots decided to go to the Czechoslovak Legions on the Western Front. The main drafting and training centre was in Stamford, Connecticut. But also in New York, Chicago, Omaha.

One of these centres was the *Center of Czech national life* in Cleveland, called „Probulov“. This name came from the South Bohemian village. Dubovický [ibid.] mentions Milan R. Štefánik (1880-1990), who was one of the three leaders of the Czechoslovak independence movement abroad. Štefánik visited the United States in 1917 to organize the recruitment of Czech and Slovak volunteers for the Western Front. This recruitment took place in this village [ibid.].

Other personalities involved in support of the foreign resistance included Thomas Čapek (1861-1950)¹⁵, who was a successful historian and banker. He was interested in the history of Czech America and his works belong to the best sources about the life of Czechs in the USA [Dubovický 2003: 34].

According to Dubovický [2003: 35], also Vojtěch Preissig (1873-1944) made a contribution to the support of the resistance movement abroad. During the war, he produced a serie of twelve posters that were designed to encourage American Czechs and Slovaks to fight for the independence of Czechoslovakia and persuade them to join the legions.

The last stage of the war effort from the Czech Americans was in the spring and summer of 1918 and ended with the so-called „Pittsburgh Agreement“¹⁶, which was signed on May 30, 1918, in the presence of T. G. Masaryk. Slovaks agreed on the support of Masaryk’s resistance movement

¹⁵Thomas Čapek arrived in the US in 1880, received a law degree from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Because of his active support of the Czech resistance movement abroad, he was considered to be „an enemy of the state“ [Dubovický 2003: 34].

¹⁶The internet website *The Brookline Connection* defines the Pittsburgh Agreement as „a document agreed by the American representatives of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Czech Silesia declaring the intent to create an independent European state to be known as Czechoslovakia. The agreement was reached during a convention of delegates in the Moose Hall in downtown Pittsburgh and is considered similar in nature to the United States Declaration of Independence“ [The Brookline Connection].

abroad, on the condition that they will have their own parliament, government, and courts in the future state. [Jaklová 2010: 303]

What should be noted is that the support of the resistance movement also involved Americans. Dubovický [2003: 36] mentions, for example, Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), who devoted his land in Connecticut to Czechs and Slovaks so they could build a legionnaire training camp. He later participated in the formulation of *the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence*¹⁷. Another of the Czech' supporters was Charles R. Crane, who had great merit in bringing T. G. Masaryk to the highest political circles [ibid.].

4.2.2 Czech-American press during the First World War

During the First World War, the press shared information on political and war events in Europe. Immediately after the proclamation of the First World War on 28 July 1914, all freethinking papers responded to this event [Jaklová 2014: 63-64]. According to Jaklová [2010: 317], during the War, *the Czech National Association* published its own monthly magazine entitled *Poselství* and the subtitle *Organisační věstník Československého národního sdružení v Americe*. It was published in Chicago from 1917 until 1921 and it was edited by F. Musil. Among other things, they also published an English-language press, published in Chicago called *The Bohemian Review*. Its aim was to inform American and Czech youth in America about the efforts of the Czech nation to achieve independence [ibid.].

4.3 Interwar period

The period that followed after the First World War was for compatriots living in America a period of success, but on the other hand, the period of

¹⁷ The Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence – also known as „Washington Declaration“ was „(the fundamental document of the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement. It was signed on October 18, 1918 by W. Wilson. The main purpose of this document was complete independence of the Czech and Slovak nations. It formulated the principles of civil liberties and policies)“. [Sovadina 2012]

decline. The war resulted in restrictions and reduced regular migration. Since that time, it had never been the same as before. This greatly endangered the future of the US compatriot community, which was dependent upon migration. Despite a fairly large natural population growth, the number of compatriots was still decreasing due to high mortality, and sometimes also due to increasing assimilation. This period was influenced by several factors [Polách 2017: 50].

After the First World War, the second generation of immigrants already outnumbered the first generation. In 1940, only 31% of Czechs, belonging to the first generation, lived in the US. Compared to the year 1910, when farmers were accounted for 33% of all immigrants, in 1940 only 18% of them lived on the farm. Most of the Czech-American compatriots had already settled in the cities at that time [Jaklová 2006: 62].

Jaklová [2006: 63] further states that after the First World War the urban communities of Czech compatriots were falling apart. This was caused by the fact that Czechs no longer needed to live around the neighbourhood of the compatriots from their homeland Czechoslovakia. According to Polách [2017: 53], some of the factors that influenced migration in the interwar period were the legislative changes in the US in the early 1920s. These changes followed as a result of discussions about American immigration policy. At first, it did not affect Czech and Slovak immigrants, except for the aforementioned prohibition on the entry of criminals, the poor or the mentally disabled people.

In 1917, a literacy test was introduced, but it did not appear as a problem for Czech immigrants. Tomáš Čapek [1926: 29] claims that illiteracy of Czechs was very low (1,7%), but on the other hand, Slovaks represented higher number of illiteracy (24%). Additional requirements for obtaining US citizenship were among other things to look decent and have at least 25 dollars [Hájková 2011: 12].

The attitude of Americans towards Czech immigrants remained negative. But it involved mostly immigrants from southern Europe. This was caused by a

fact that mostly poor and manual workers were the usual immigrants coming to America. Consequently, the so-called immigration limit was set for each ethnic group (nationality) and the limit was set for each calendar year. Its amount was then calculated as 3% of immigration in the year of 1910. The limit did not really help to reduce migration to the US, so in 1924 it was reduced to 2% for Eastern European and Southern European immigrants. Subsequent, and also the last effort to regulate migration, came in 1927 (sometimes 1929 is also stated). This time, the total migration from Europe was limited to 150,000 people per year¹⁸ [Polách 2017: 54]. For Czechoslovak emigrants, this meant that only 14,000 people a year could legally go to the US between the years 1921 and 1924. But after 1929, this number was lowered and only 3,000 people a year were allowed to emigrate to the US [Dubovický 1996: 232].

The requirement for emigration to the United States slightly differed from those of the 19th century. Every emigrant now needed a visa that he had to apply for at American consul. Furthermore, it was necessary to present a certificate of probity¹⁹, a military certificate, marriage certificate, medical certificate and also two photographs [Vaculík 2009: 282].

4.3.1 Professions

However, what should also be noted is that the Czech-Americans have also achieved many successes in the interwar period. Compatriots spread to more than just agricultural and economic sectors, as it had been until that time. For instance, in 1923, Chicago was the most popular [Vaculík 2009: 282].

A lot of so-called professionalists, including professions such as lawyers and doctors, started their careers there. According to Vaculík [ibid.], a number of persons employed in this sector accounted for 1,165. There was also a large number of municipal officials and attendants, accounted for 610 people in total.

¹⁸Of these 150,000 people, 60% were German and British [Polách 2017: 54].

¹⁹„The certificate of probity was a confirmation from the police that a person had no crime or other such an activity on their record“[Holocaust 2011].

Also, 635 owners of car-parks, 730 merchants, and 620 barbers. As a result of post-war prohibition,²⁰ many Czech breweries were liquidated. Those that survived were only 2 in Cleveland, and 3 in Chicago. Czech-Americans, who lived in New York, tried to earn money by selling cigars and pearls. Pearl craftsmanship was really popular among compatriots, only in New York was already 40 Czech workshops [ibid.].

There were also those who had the opportunity to integrate and engage in diplomatic services. These included Karel Vopička (Charles J. Vopicka) who was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson [Cook] as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1913-1920 [Vaculík 2009:282]. The most important and most famous political example of the involvement of Czechs in America was Antonín (Anton) J. Čermák (1873-1933), who was originally from the city of Kladno [Polišenský 1996: 95]. Together with his parents, they settled in Chicago, where Antonín studied business school and law, and at the same time, he tried to earn money by doing various auxiliary works. He started to engage in politics in 1902 as a 29 years-old, and became a member of the Legislature of the State of Illinois. Among other things, he was an uncompromising opponent of prohibition. In 1931, he was elected Mayor of Chicago [Dubovický 200:41]. He dies as a victim of the attempt to assassinate the newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt in February 1933 [Polách 2017: 54].

4.3.2 Preserving the Czech language

Vaculík [2009: 282] mentions in his book the famous Tomáš Čapek, who also deals with the issue of compatriots in America. In relation to that, Čapek describes the American school, thanks to which, there were proper assimilations in the 20th century. Čapek further wrote, quote:

²⁰The prohibition began after the end of WWI, after the Volstead Act was passed along with the ratification of the 18th Amendment in January 1919. It was a ban which prevented alcohol from being made, transported or sold [Alkoholium].

„The moment the child crosses the threshold of the school, the fate of the future member is sealed...Whoever goes to school here is then unable to speak Czech.“

„Tu chvíli, kdy dítě překročí práh školy, jest osud budoucího příslušníka zpečetěn...Kdo vychodil zdejší školu, není schopen česky jednat.“

At that time, parents spoke in the Czech language with their children at home, but children were answering in English. Young people were interested in learning and improving themselves in English, so they searched for various English written literature and newspapers [Vaculík 2009: 282].

Another influence on the assimilation of compatriots to American society was also their deployment throughout the United States. Because of the long distance, the compatriots were rarely in touch. Their dwellings and settlements were separated and isolated. Therefore, people were primarily dependent on themselves or on the Czech or Slovak associations that existed in their city, if there were any [ibid.].

Furthermore, Vaculík [2009: 283] adds that after World War I, approximately one hundred Czech-language complementary schools were maintained in America. They focused mainly on teaching the Czech language. Teaching mostly took place in national houses of Czech clubs or individuals, but in some towns, special buildings only for education were built. Lessons took place on Sunday and in the afternoon during the weekdays. Children had the opportunity to learn the basics of the Czech language, learn to sing Czech songs, and play the theatre [ibid.].

4.4 Czechs in America during the Second World War

Prior to the Second World War, three-generation compatriots claimed their origin in North America [Vaculík 2009: 285]. As Polách [2017: 90] mentions in his book, those events, that took place in September 1938 and the following consequences in the spring of 1939, touched a huge number of Americans of Czech origin. After the adoption of the Munich Agreement²¹ and its subsequent expulsion from Sudetenland²², many of the Czech-Americans lost their homeland. They often heard the names of towns and villages that used to be their homes, or their parents and grandparents [Vaculík 2009: 285].

According to the population census of 1940, Polách [2017: 90] claims that 1 004 800 Americans were registered for the Czechoslovakian origin. To this number, we can include not only the first generation of immigrants but also the second and third generations. It is also stated that in comparison to America, where was approximately 15 million people living at that time, the Czechoslovakian minority in the US had a certain economic and political strength [ibid.].

Following the events of the Munich Agreement in 1938, a new group of immigrants emerged in America. They were predominantly refugees of Jewish origin who were trying to escape and hide from the threat of Nazism [Dubovický 2003: 42].

²¹According to the website Bojovali za Československo, „the Munich Agreement was concluded between Adolf Hitler (Germany), Benito Mussolini (Italy), Édouard Daladier (France) and Neville Chamberlain (Great Britain) on September 30, 1938. The Agreement ordered Czechoslovakia to undergo border area shared with Germany, historically belonging to the Czech state, with more than 50% of the German population“ [Bojovali za Československo].

²²Sudetenland – part of northern and western Bohemia and northern Moravia that was in 1938 annexed by Germany, and then returned to Czechoslovakia in 1945 [Dictionary2019].

4.4.1 Relief Action during the Second World War

Czech and Slovak compatriots living in America at that time, tried to support the fight against Nazism in every possible way. Initially, they were allowed to get into the subconscious of American public opinion through various brochures, articles in the press, letter campaigns that were sent to congress members, and among other things, with financial collections. Dubovický [2003: 44], estimates that the total financial aid of compatriots and American friends was up to five million dollars during the war.

According to Polách [2017: 103-104], the financial collections and larger amounts of money could be obtained, for example, by organizing concerts, public collections, and sales. Another way to collect money was through the bazaars, which were already organized during the First World War. These bazaars served as charitable events, but at the same time, it was a great opportunity to meet other Czech and Slovak compatriots, but also Americans. These events usually took place in public places, halls of residence, gymnasiums or halls of supportive associations. There were items for auction that the organizers received in the form of donation or sponsorship from companies or private individuals. All the profits then went to compatriots help, including the proceeds of ticket sales, baked cookies or playing various games. This money was later sent to individual associations, such as *the American Friends of Czechoslovakia*, *the Czechoslovak Relief Committee*, and also to *Czechoslovak Red Cross*²³ [ibid.].

Czech and Slovak compatriots also helped newcomers that came to America. They helped some of them to find a job, others to orient themselves after their arrival in the US [Polách 2017: 106]. They also helped Czechoslovak refugees and soldiers on the fronts, with help of the above-mentioned association *the American Friends of Czechoslovakia*. They collected food, clothing, and medicine, along with the documents needed for the new exiles. The women's

²³In Czech language – „Američtí přátelé Československa; Československý pomocný výbor; Červený kříž“.

associations *Včelky* and *Priadky*, that were already mentioned above, took care of the help. Their work was to produce goods for soldiers, but they also provide help to other security organizations [Polách 2017: 123]. Polách [ibid.] mentions an organization called *Dámský pomocný výbor v Detroitu* (DPV), that consisted of women associations mentioned above, and also *Včelky ČSN* and *Včelky Svazu českých katolíků*.

Furthermore, Polách [ibid.] states that they knit 502 sweaters, prepared and folded 44 990 bandages for *the American Red Cross*, sent Christmas gifts to 60 compatriots, and all that during the 3 years time. In December 1939, so-called „Christmas packages“ were sent to Czechoslovak soldiers in France. These packages contained food, warm clothes, toiletries (razor blades, toothbrushes), and cigarettes. They also very often sent books, dictionaries or conversational guides, to help soldiers improve their language knowledge [Polách 2017: 107-108].

Since July 1940, their assistance was controlled by the *Czechoslovak Relief Committee*²⁴, and since 1943 by the *United Czechoslovak Relief*²⁵. Later in 1944 by the *American Relief for Czechoslovakia*²⁶ [Jožák 1995: 22]. The help of American compatriots then continued also after the end of the war, when they provided aid to the restored republic [Šatava 1996: 166].

4.4.2 Czechoslovak resistance movement during the Second World War

As well as during the First World War, the second anti-war resistance movement abroad was created during the Second World War. Members of this resistance movement, including the Air Force and other forces, were not satisfied with surrender, and they wanted to engage in combat operations abroad. Although, in comparison to the First World War, significantly less Czech-American

²⁴ „Československá pomocný výbor“.

²⁵ „Spojená pomoc Československu“.

²⁶ „Americká pomoc Československu“.

volunteers participated in this resistance, which as Polách [2017: 106-107] explains, was caused by the ageing of the first generation immigrants, and the transformation of the compatriot community. The leader of this anti-fascist resistance was a former president Dr Edvard Beneš.²⁷ At that time, the political office of Dr Beneš, led by Dr Ján Papánek²⁸. Its function was to regulate the activities of Czechoslovak citizens. Edvard Beneš in the time of his absence authorized Papánek to lead also the US resistance movement abroad. [Jožák 1995: 19]

Many Czechoslovak compatriots have also decided to join the US Army, most likely to gain American citizenship, or purely out of the desire to engage in combat operations on the side of the Americans [Polách 2017: 107]. Polách further estimates that about 60 to 207 thousand Czechoslovak compatriots were involved in the armed forces [Polách 2017: 117].

4.4.3 Czech-American press during the Second World War

As in the First World War, in the Second World War, the compatriot press played an important role. Czech-American compatriot periodicals were published in Czech, Slovak and English languages. Its important function was to promote the compatriot resistance movement, and also to inform about relief actions in support of refugees and emigrants [Jaklová 2014: 60].

During the Second World War, newspapers, magazines, calendars and leaflets played an important role as a means of fighting the anti-Hitler coalition. All Czech-American periodicals watched war events since the beginning and supported the idea of restoring the state of Czechs and Slovaks. The press body

²⁷Edvard Beneš (1884-1948) – „led the Czechoslovakia’s anti-fascist resistance movement abroad. In 1918, he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the newly-established Czechoslovak state, and in 1935 he became the President of Czechoslovak Republic“ [Dubovický 2003: 43].

²⁸Ján Papánek (1896-1991) – „slovak politician and diplomat. After the war, he was appointed Permanent Representative of the Czechoslovak Republic to the United Nations. Together with Eleanor Roosevelt, he was a member of a committee of experts, that formulated the Declaration of Human Rights“ [Dubovický 2003: 48].

of the *Czechoslovak National Council* was the *ČSNR*²⁹ Press Service. This paper, published by J. Martínek, brought information in Czech, Slovak and English language. *ČSNRA*³⁰ also published its own English monthly magazine called *The News from Czechoslovakia*, whose editor was J. Martínek and his co-worker J. Kuchyňka [Jaklová 2010: 319-320].

4.5 Czech-Americans during the post-war period

4.5.1 Migration during the post-war period

After the Second World War, more waves of emigration began as a reaction to the events happening in Czechoslovakia. In this period, Chada [1981: 220] divides three groups of emigrants. The first group left for the USA after the year of 1945 and was mostly made up of refugees who accepted Hacha's regime in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The aim of these refugees was to live in peace, and therefore they respected the only possible form of existence of their homeland, which was actually under Nazi-controlled Czechoslovakia. Others from this immigrant group could be then referred to as collaborators [ibid.].

The second wave of immigrants followed the February Revolution of 1948³¹. This group of refugees is considered to be the greatest. People ran away from the communist regime and we can include among them people with university education, skilled craftsmen, industrialists, tradesmen, politicians, artist, and all others who were not liked by the new regime [Chada 1981: 220]. Dubovický [2003: 49] states that about 100 000 people left Czechoslovakia for the United States by 1950. These immigrants mostly settled in Washington, D.C., despite the fact that Chicago and New York were the main areas for compatriots.

According to Polišíenský [1996: 110], immigrants from both the first and the second waves of migration were people who already attended the First

²⁹Československá národní rada.

³⁰Československá národní rada Ameriky.

³¹The February Revolution of 1948 represented the culmination of the coup, whose aim was to establish communist dictatorship, disposal of parliamentary democratic system and the connection of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet power Bloc [Totev].

Republic schools, and they already had the knowledge of the English language or they were able to learn the language very quickly. The assimilation process in the American environment was much easier for them and faster than for the older immigration groups.

Nešpor [2002: 46] states that the third wave of emigration began with the opening of borders in 1968 during the so-called „Prague Spring“³², and lasted until November 1989. This wave included those who graduated from high schools and colleges in Czechoslovakia and also those who participated in political actions. These emigrants escaped mainly to the West, as well as the emigrants in post-February of 1948. Although this wave of immigrant settled predominantly in Canada, Australia and Germany, several thousands of them emigrated to the United States during a very short period of two years. [Dubovický 2003: 52]

Tigrid [1990: 92] divides emigrants after the year of 1968 into three groups. The first group consisted of people who were persecuted or discriminated by the regime and who took the opportunity to leave their homeland. In most cases with the whole family and without difficulties. The second group, very numerous, included doctors, engineers, technicians, architects, professors, artists, and also students. The reasons that led this group to leave Czechoslovakia were mostly because of political discrimination. Finally, the third group included active participants in the reform movement, mostly officials and members of *the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*³³. This group was the smallest, but politically most important. Tigrid [ibid.] includes in this group former state and party officials, journalists, writers as well as university professors.

Vaculík [2009: 288] states that in the year of 1950, 278 000 both Czechs and Slovaks of the first generation lived in the USA. Most of the first generation immigrants settled in Illinois (49 185), Pennsylvania (48 643) and New York

³²Prague Spring –A short period of political reforms and liberalization of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia that was interrupted by the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies [Digital Guide].

³³In Czech language – Komunistická Strana Československa (KSČ).

(44 111). The US Law of 1957 then stipulated that every new applicant, born in Czechoslovakia, who applied for US citizenship before the year of 1954, would receive an American visa immediately. In some cases, such as the parents of American citizens, married couples and minor children of immigrants, siblings, adult children of American citizens, were granted a visa immediately. All applicants had to meet the condition of political reliability [ibid].

4.5.2 Czech language preservation during the post-war period

As for the maintenance of the Czech language after the Second World War, Vaculík [2009: 288] notes that the complementary school still functioned at that time. They were both ecclesiastical and secular. At the end of the Second World War, there were 630 students attending secular schools, but the number was constantly decreasing. In some smaller towns, schools disappeared completely. In secondary schools, that did not have enough students that would learn Czech, the teaching was stopped. This happened, for instance, in Chicago and Texas.

Czech adult learning courses were held at Cedar Rapids and there was also another complementary school established in Washington, that was similar to one in Nebraska. The Czech language was also taught at some universities that include Austin and Columbia University. Later in 1962, the University of Chicago opened a department of the Czech language [ibid.].

Vaculík [ibid.] also mentions that when the school was too far from the people, the parents had to teach their children at home. Because of that, in 1950s, so-called „field schools“³⁴ were established in Texas. People had to find someone who was willing and able to teach their children. Nevertheless, there was not many qualified people, so sometimes children had to walk up to 8 kilometres to another school.

³⁴It was a way of home schooling children. [Vaculík 2009: 288].

5 PRACTICAL SECTION

5.1 The end of the 20th century

The years 1970 and 1980 were characterized, according to Polišíenský [1996: 111], as a period of success, but at the same time the upcoming oil crisis, inflation and recession for citizens of the United States broke out. Following the political coup in Czechoslovakia in 1989, a small number of population left Czechoslovakia and went to the United States. These emigrants were able to assimilate quickly in the new environment, mainly because of their education, language skills and high qualifications [Jaklová 2014: 78]. Šatava [1996: 158] estimates that during the period from 1970 until 1990, about 20 000 people emigrated to the United States.

According to Jaklová [2014: 76], generally after 1989 and also in present, mostly people of younger generations are leaving for the United States. Most often because of the opportunity to get a better job in an economically more advanced country. However, after some time, gaining new experiences and collecting money, most of them then decide to return to the Czech Republic, although some of them decide to settle there [ibid.]. According to the United States Census of 1990, 1.3 million people claimed their Czech origin, and over 300 000 claimed Czechoslovak origin. As a result, the United States is ranked first in terms of the greatest Czech community abroad. The largest Czech communities are concentrated in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Washington, St. Paul/Minneapolis. Furthermore, in Texas, Illinois, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Nebraska. Specifically in Nebraska is the largest group of people of Czech origin in relation to the total population number, and that is 6.2% [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2013].

5.2 Contemporary Czech-American organizations and clubs

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic [2013] data, based on the latest US Census of 1990, there are 166 Czech-American compatriot associations registered in the United States. Organizations and societies were

formed during the era of immigration, and were founded by Czech compatriots living in the United States. Their purpose was to help new immigrants, but also to preserve the Czech language knowledge and cultural heritage [ibid.].

One of the most important and popular organizations is *the American Friends of the Czech Republic*³⁵, founded in 1995 to support and promote Czech interests in the United States. It has approximately 200 members of American citizens of Czech origin. Another well-known association is the *Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences*³⁶ that was established in 1958, and has approximately 2 000 members, including scientists, professors, economists and artists [ibid.].

We must not forget to mention one of the oldest existing organizations that have been existing for more than 150 years now. It is the *American Sokol Organization* (Americký Sokol), founded in 1862 in St. Louis, Missouri. It is a worldwide, sports and cultural-educational organization. Today, it is considered to be the largest American Sokol organization that contributes to the preservation of Czech heritage. There are currently three major Sokol organizations in the United States: *Americký Sokol, Sokol USA and Dělnický Americký Sokol* [ibid.].

Even at the beginning of the 21st century, existed the above-mentioned *Czechoslovak National Council of America*, that was established during the First World War in 1918 as a resistance organization, and published articles aimed at strengthening the compatriot community with the old homeland. However, this organization terminated its activities in 2003 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs].

Besides these wide-spread organizations, there are also smaller ones that are focused mainly on cultural, educational and entertainment events for Czechs living in the United States. These clubs are mostly located in certain states, cities or regions. Here are some examples: *Czech and Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City, Czech Institute of Los Angeles, Czech-Slovak Culture and Business Center*

³⁵Američtí přátelé České Republiky (AFoCR).

³⁶Společnost pro vědy a umění (SVU).

of Florida, Nebraska Czechs Inc., which includes other clubs such as Nebraska Czechs of Clarkson, Nebraska Czechs of Lincoln, etc. [Český rozhlas 7].

5.3 The contemporary Czech-American press

Dubovický [2003: 55] claims that about fifty Czech-American periodicals are published in the United States in the present. The most famous is the periodical called *Americké listy*, that continues in activities of periodical *New Yorkské listy*³⁷, that was founded in 1875. Also the newspaper *Československé noviny* (The Czechoslovak Newspaper) and *Věštník S.P.J.S.T.*³⁸, that is the only English-language weekly. These periodicals are focused mostly on Czech genealogy, history and culture. Jaklová [2006: 74] adds that these two periodicals contain the most Czech-themed texts of all periodicals. They are mostly written in the Czech language, sometimes Slovak articles, as well as English advertisements, can be found inside.

Some compatriot associations and clubs also publish their periodicals or newspaper. For example, Dubovický [2003: 55] considers *The News of the Czech Cultural Center* in Houston, Texas, to be one of the best magazines, published by the Czech compatriot club. In addition, the magazine called *Chicago Žurnál* (The Chicago Journal) belongs to the newest established magazines and is intended for newcomers to the United States [ibid.].

³⁷Between 1990-1996, this periodical was published under the name *Československý týdeník* (The Czechoslovak Weekly) [Dubovický 2003: 55].

³⁸*S.P.J.S.T. - Věštník Slovanské Podpůrné Jednoty Státu Texas* (The Slavonic Benevolent Society of the State of Texas).

6 INTERVIEWS

Interview no. 1

Name: Hana Klein-Donnelley

Age: 71

Current city/state of residence: Camarillo, California

Questions:

1. Why did you decide to emigrate to the United States? And how long have you been living there? In which state/city have you been living?

„In 1962, my parents had the opportunity to request emigration to Israel and they applied. At that time we were living in Trutnov, Czech Republic. After being denied emigration status, my father transferred to work in Kosice, Slovakia and applied for emigration once again. At that time we were granted an exit visa. We decided to change our destination to the USA and spend 6 months in Genova, Italy waiting for a visa to enter the USA. Being a young teenager, I had no input on the decision.“

2. Where did you live in Czechoslovakia?

„Trutnov until 1962, and Kosice from 8/1962 to 8/1964.“

3. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„I came with my parents, sister and brother. Our Aunt, Uncle and cousin from Trutnov came about 6 months prior to us.“

4. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

„Couple of main things that I remember are long lines for food and paper products. There was no freedom of speech. We had to make sure all windows and doors were locked and secured when we discussed our plans for emigration.“

5. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„The store windows had everything anybody could ever need or want. And mainly, no lines. People were speaking a lot of different languages and there was a lot of different ethnic groups.“

6. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„Little but, until I learned English. However, we first lived in New York and met quite a few people that emigrated like us from Czechoslovakia, and we formed a social group. So that made things easier.“

7. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„It was not easy, my first job was working in a factory that was owned by friends of my parents. After 6 months, we moved to Detroit, Michigan and I went to school to be a manicurist. When I got a job in a hair salon, my English improved and things got much easier. In 1967 I moved back to New York and started working in a bank. In 1969, moved back to Detroit and again got a job in a bank. In December of 1970, I went on vacation to Los Angeles and stayed. After a few years, I got married to an American and had two children. Now we have 4 grandchildren. My current position is Chief Financial Officer of Tredent Data Systems. I also own 25% of the company. We are data communications distributors. I also do all the financial reports for a company that owns 4 apartment buildings and during tax season I prepare tax returns to a couple of clients.“

8. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

„I had no knowledge of the English language and since I was already almost 18, I did not want to go to high school. So I did a lot of studying in the evenings. My English is now much better than my Czech.“

9. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„Since I was not given a choice, I would have to say that no, I have no regrets. Even though, in the beginning, it was not easy.“

10. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„No, I'm not. I do attend some of the activities that the Czech consulate offers.“

11. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„Yes the first time was in 1990 and I go every couple of years. Last being in May of 2018.“

12. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions with your family?

„No, not really. The only thing that I do is my cooking. I tend to do quite a bit of Czech and Hungarian cooking. For example, I make Czech potato salad, karbanátky. I play a lot of Czech music and I thought my kids all about Spejbl and Hurvinek.“

Interview no. 2

Name: Edward P. Mikulcik

Age: 71

Current city/state of residence: Peachtree City, GA

Questions:

1. Why did you decide to emigrate to the United States? And how long have you been living there? In which state/city have you been living?

„My mother was the main reason for our immigration. Our family had a very poor political future. Mother’s sister living in the US and brother (RAF pilot during the war) living in Australia. We never held Czech passports and we were not allowed to travel outside of Czechoslovakia. We joined the mom’s sister in Schenectady, NY. At the age of 18, I completed US high school (grades 11 and 12) and went to the State University of New York in Albany NY, studying History and Political Science.“

2. Where did you live in Bohemia?

„Born In Karlovy Vary, where my grandparents ran a hotel, but after it was nationalized I lived in Prague.“

3. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„With my mother.“

4. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

„Hardcore communism.“

5. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„Schenectady was a provincial city, and at first I was disappointed but within one year I have adapted to the US culture and living condition.“

6. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„Not at all. Once I learned English, everything fell in place.“

7. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„I was also very lucky with jobs. Even during high school summer vacation, I had a job. At the University I worked in the University Post office.“

After graduation, I worked for a retail store while applying for a permanent job. In 1972 got hired by Delta and retired after nearly 34 years.“

8. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

„No English at all when we arrive in the US, but within one year I was fairly fluent.“

9. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„No.“

10. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„No! Czechs are not very cohesive, especially those that came after 1968. It is a Czech disease of speaking Czech even though they know that some of us are married to English speaking spouses. However, through my wife, I am a member of the Swiss American Club, where all their meetings and actions and conducted in English.“

11. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„Yes many time!“

12. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions at your home?

„Yes, Christmas and Easter party. I also like to visit the Old Czech communities in the US, in particular in Texas during their festivals. And that is done in English.“

Interview no. 3

Name: Miriam Toth (Milena Bermanova)

Age: 72

Current city/state of residence: Encino, CA

Questions:

1. Why did you decide to emigrate to the United States? And how long have you been living there? In which state/city have you been living?

„My parents tried to leave CSR almost immediately after 1948. I grew up “knowing” that someday we will be leaving my country of birth. In 1964 we finally received the permission to give up our citizenship and leave the country. We arrived and stayed in NYC. I eventually moved to Los Angeles area 18 years ago.“

2. Where did you live in Bohemia?

„I was born and lived in Trutnov for almost 18 years.“

3. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„I came at the age of 18 with my parents.“

4. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

„The country was under the communist regime.“

5. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„Life in the US was great at that time (for us). The freedom of being able to live wherever we wanted, the freedom to get a job we wanted, the freedom to practice our religion and so on.“

6. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„I had no trouble assimilating into the life. I was the first in the family to learn enough English to be able to get a driver’s license and take care of anything my parents needed to do that required the knowledge of the language.“

7. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„I am currently retired, but when I first arrived I got a job at a company making fragrances for various manufacturing companies, like perfumes,

colognes and even cleaning products. Later in life, my father and I started Jewelry manufacturing company in NY and that for many years became my "profession".

8. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

"I had a little bit of knowledge of English from my HS classes in Trutnov, but I found out that NY English was a bit different than the British English I was taught at school."

9. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„No.“

10. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„Only of a few online FB groups that I have recently joined.“

11. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„The first time I was allowed to go back was in 1991 after the Velvet Revolution. Since then I've been back 3 times to visit my hometown, visit my childhood friend, and to take my daughter to show her when I grew up.“

12. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions?

„Not really, although whenever I visit New York we have family dinners at a Czech restaurant in Astoria, New York.“

Interview no. 4

Name: Alena Wilson

Age: 74

Current city/state of residence: Lentolakes, Florida

Questions:

1. What were the reasons for your emigration?

„My husband said that we will not live in a country like that. That our son will grow up in a country where there is freedom.“

2. Where did you live in Czechoslovakia?

„I lived in the city of Pilsen, one block from the square.“

3. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„With my husband and son.“

4. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

„It was in 1968 when there was a Russian occupation. It took a long time, we went to Austria for a holiday in 1969 and we signed up at the American Embassy there. They said that we have to go to the camp, where all emigrants have to wait until they verify if they are communists or not. We spent 6 months in Vienna and then they lent us money. And we went to the US on 5th February 1970.“

5. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„When we arrived in New York, it was cold and a lot of snow. There were heaps of rubbish on the streets. We thought, we will start wrong but it will continue well.“

6. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„We met a man, that was born in the US but his parents were from Slovakia. He helped us to find a job.“

7. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„My husband worked at night, I worked during the day so we could be home with our son. After 2 years we collected enough money. They closed the company where we worked so we had to move. They moved the company to Long

Island, so we bought a house there and we lived there for 13 years. When my husband died, our son was already adult and he was at the military service in the air force. He signed up for 4 years so the state would offer him to attend college for free. He was there and I had to sell the house and I moved to California. I lived there alone for 5 years and then they closed the company I worked in for another time. So I moved to Chicago, Illinois and after 2 years I met an amazing man and we got married, and then we moved to Florida.“

8. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

„We could not speak English, we had to express ourselves with hands and legs. When my son went to the 1st grade, he started to learn the English language so they could evaluate him. I started to learn English with him. What helped me the most was watching movies. We had a programme for children. That helped me a lot.“

10. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„No, I have always said that I am never going back to the Czech Republic for good. I invite my brother to visit me here, in America. We are always in touch and especially now when everybody has a computer. I also live in Florida longer than I lived in Czechoslovakia. I have my friends here and I live a really good life. Also, I have never liked winter so now as I am living in Florida, we do not have winter, it is always warm here.“

11. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„Not here, there is a city near Chicago, Illinois, that is almost Czech.“

12. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„I am visiting the Czech Republic almost every two years.“

13. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions?

„Especially Christmas. Here, Americans celebrate Christmas on the 25th in the morning. We celebrate Christmas Eve in the evening. For dinner, I make potato salad, carp schnitzels. After dinner we gather around the Christmas tree, everybody is dressed nicely. And I also keep up with Easter traditions. I have to colour the eggs and I like to decorate everything.“

Interview no. 5

Name: Peter Kania

Age: 75

Current city/state of residence: Naples, FL

Questions:

1. What were the reasons for your emigration?

“We left Czechoslovakia for political reasons.”

2. Why did you choose the United States? How long have you been living there? In which state/city have you been living?

“We liked the American prosperity based on their political system. We came here 1978 from Germany where we spent the years 1969-1978. We have been living in the Poughkeepsie, NY area since 1978. We have also been living in Naples, FL which is now our primary residence since 2015.”

3. Where did you live in Bohemia?

“Brno.”

4. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

“It was me, my wife and a son.”

5. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

“Czechoslovakia was ruled by Communists and as a practising Catholic, I had no intention to join the party. So there was no future there for me or my family.”

6. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

“The US was a prospering country.”

7. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

“Coming from Germany it still was an adjustment, especially for my wife and our son. Our daughter was born in Germany and was 5 years old where we came so she was adapting much better.”

8. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

“Not really. Within a year I found a job with IBM which I held until 2014 when I retired.”

9. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

“It was hard to learn German but when I came to the US I already had some knowledge of English given IBM as an international company using English as the language of communication.”

10. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

“My wife did but I never did myself.”

11. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

“No.”

12. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

“A number of times, the last time in 2010.”

13. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions?

“We speak Czech with my wife, that’s about it.”

Interview no. 6

Name: *Dr Mila Šašková - Pierce*

Age: *unknown*

Current city/state of residence: *Nebraska*

Questions:

1. What were the reasons for your emigration?

„I have emigrated in 1969 first from Czechoslovakia then, and it was in August for obvious reasons. I felt that at that point, there was no point to stay in Czechoslovakia for political, and also for moral and ethical reasons. And I had a unique possibility just to legally leave Czechoslovakia and then I stayed behind, it was, of course, illegal, and I did not return.“

2. Why did you choose the United States? How long have you been living there? In which state/city?

„Actually, first I lived in Belgium in Brussels where I finished my first part of university studies, and then I received a scholarship from the University of Kansas. I went to the US, to Kansas and I finished there my PhD. in Lawrence, Kansas and I also met my future husband there. We got married and then I found a job in Nebraska and we moved to Nebraska, we raised our children here. And here I am.“

3. Where did you live in Czechoslovakia?

„I was born in Prague and I lived in Prague.“

4. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„Alone.“

5. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„My first impressions of US was sheer terror. I was thinking „How will I make it through this totally alien world?“ So that was my first impression. And the second impression was „you better sit on your rear end and work and work and work, and give it a good strong try.“

6. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„It was hard to adapt anywhere, where I stayed for some time. You know, it was hard then. It was hard at the same time because I had the opportunity to study, to be a student. I was in a group of supportive people. Youngsters kind of

“stick up for each other”, so it was easier to be young and to be in the University environment. The professors were helpful, and certainly my classmates.“

7. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„Frankly speaking, it was easier than in Belgium. In Belgium to get a job you have to know people, you have to form alliances. I always joke that I have washed mountains of dishes in every restaurant in Brussels to support myself. So it was truly hard. In the US when I applied for a job, the question was „Show me what you know“. And it was not really about who do you know. Although I had to be recommended. I had to have letters that stated that I was able to do something and show what I did previously. Of course at the University, it is easier in the sense that in the US, first of all, your own University will never hire you, it is a rule. You have to go somewhere else. During the interview you have to present an academic paper, you have to show in one or two classes what you can teach and how you can teach. And it is not a lecture, you cannot make a lecture. You have to work with students in the American academic way, that is that you have a lesson plan that includes their participation, they have to support their opinions and make their opinions. So in this way, you have much more chance to show your personality, your ability to teach. In the academic paper you have an opportunity to show that you can think independently and propose new knowledge, and so on the academic level it was easier because the people who were willing to hire you, had already read whatever you had published, what other people thought about you, they could call them and say: „Well, we are thinking about inviting her for a job interview. Tell us something about her.“ In this sense, it was not as difficult.“

➤ And you worked as a professor of Russian?

„I was a professor of Russian but I also taught as a graduate student. As every graduate student all over the world, they offered me to teach something and I would say „How much?“. Depending on their answer I would say „Of course I can teach it.“ And so I taught also Introduction to Philosophy, Western civilization and its history, Methodology of Foreign language teaching, Cultural history of the Great Plains. Of course, I taught also the Czech language whenever it was necessary. I do it now still on the side even though I am retired officially. I had kind of a wider teaching field.

➤ Is there a lot of people that want to learn the Czech language now?

„No, there are not. It depends, it depends on the teacher and also on the group of people who gather around the teacher. Then they help to spread the news that there is an opportunity to learn Czech. You have to do advertising, you have to search for the students. But the teacher that we have now, Dr Waissierova in Nebraska, she has all together for 3 years about 45 students. The University of Southern California has 3 students, New York University has 5 students. It is

enormous. In Kansas, I have, 3 but it is because the University did not open the class until five days before the classes started, so it was too late.“

8. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

„When I came to the United States, what happened was that I thought that my English was much much better than it was. Because when you go to University, you need knowledge of the abstract language. As you know, English abstract language is quite different from the concrete everyday language. Partially, I was using my academic knowledge of French. It was sometimes funny and sometimes disastrous consequences because French is quite dangerous in English. And sometimes I just really had to hit the books and study hard. I had to not only learn the content but also the language for the expression of the content, and then also how to think in English. Also studying in English in an American school was quite different from studying in the European school. In the European school, when you study at the University and note, I studied only for 5 years so it was a lower level of studies. The EU schools during my age at that time, you had to prove that you learnt what the professor presented. In the US, you had to learn that you can use and reflect about the knowledge that was presented but also that you can think, support, discuss the knowledge, and invent new knowledge, new original thoughts. That was really difficult because it was not anymore the language I could learn in a book. First of all, I had to learn not only the language how to express it but way how to think, how to support my opinions and how to reflect verbally about the knowledge that I have just acquired. Essentially, I had to be intellectually on my own and combined with the language, that was hard. The university culture of thinking and supporting opinions was really hard. I was an excellent student in Belgium and I was barely possible the first year in American University.“

9. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„Looking at what would have happened to me, I was not willing to compromise. The consequences would have been catastrophic for my life. Intellectually, no, I do not regret it. As one of my Czech friends said: „Look at your achievements. Would you have done it in Prague? No.“ On the other hand, when I think about the fact that I was not there when my beloved grandmother died or was dying. I was not there when my absolutely beloved grandpa was dying, I was not there when my mum died, I was not there when my father died, I was not there when my sister died. I lost all this love and family support which nobody could replace for me. And the other thing is that I have a friend there and his quotable was: “Mila you could have done it anywhere in the world“, and it is not true. In Czechoslovakia, if you took a stand, you could not have done it. I do regret the emotional loss, painfully. I do not regret the intellectual acquisition.“

10. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„Sure, actually, my husband and I, we have founded the Czech and Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City, sometime in the early 80s. We are still members of it although it is far away. We are also members of the Czechs of Lincoln. Then we are members of the Czech Komenský Club, which is a student club and I was a supervisor for 29 years of it. I am also a member of Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences“ and then I am a member of World Association of the teacher of Czech and then I am a member of the Czechoslovakian Geological Society.“

11. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„Yes, and I got also nominated and accepted by the Czech government as an Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Nebraska.“

12. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions?

„I do, I keep up with traditions. We do have Christmas traditions, Easter traditions and I cook Czech food.“

Interview no. 7

Name: Alexandra Bodamer

Age: 73

Current city/state of residence: San Diego – Imperial Beach, California

Questions:

1. What were the reasons for your emigration?

„Even if every single member of my family was a member of the communist party, I was not. And my husband was not either. On top of that, his mother was married and was living in Vienna. So that was working against us. We were living in Brno on Masarykova street, a few buildings from Namesti Svobody. In the bottom apartment was a woman who constantly reported every our movement to police. That was from 1970- 1979. She also had keys to our apartment so when we were at work she had a chance to go in. We had a lot of gifts (clothes, jewellery etc.) from Austria and the police knew all about that. All that was a reason for us to leave. We were living under a lot of pressure, but not at work. Just at home.

2. Why did you choose the United States? How long have you been living there? In which state/city have you been living?

„At 1979 after finally getting a visa for myself, husband and 2 sons, we went on a trip to Yugoslavia, then immediately to Austrian embassy at Zagreb where we asked for political asylum, got visas to Austria and next day left by train. In Vienna, we went right away ask for asylum. They confiscated our Czech passports and gave us temporary Austrian ones. With those, we went first to the South African embassy because my husband relatives lived at Cape Town. They told us they can give us a visa only if we come again a show them visa from two other countries. So we were debating between Australia and the USA and consider that in the US was possible to get citizenship in 5 years, we pick up the USA. Also, we had friends from Brno living here already. After 3 months of living in Vienna, we came to the USA in December 1979 and because of our friend who signed for us, we end up in California in Laguna Beach. After one year we moved to Chicago area to start a business with my husband two cousins and again after 8 years we moved back to California.“

3. Where did you live in Czechoslovakia?

„Iwas born in Trebic, than went to pharmacy school in Brno, got married and lived in Brno until 1979.“

4. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„I came to the USA with husband and two sons (7 and 10 years old).“

5. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

„On the material side, we were doing better than average. We had a good job with good pay, incredible apartment, car, money in the bank, house in Třebíč. Also, chance to get a lot of clothes and other stuff from Austria. But could not travel, were constantly watched and reported. Even if we went to a restaurant. Once we went for 3 days trip to Budapest, had to apply for permission 3 months before and on the bus was the person who watched and reported on everybody. Everyone was limited what to do, what to buy, what to say, where to go.“

6. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„Situation in the US was completely different. We could finally speak aloud and not to whisper, we were welcomed with open arms since nobody at that time in Laguna Beach was escapee from communist country, suddenly we had a lot of friends who helped us not only with living, clothes (we came to the US with 4 pieces of luggage and some money), admitting my sons to school right away and also providing learning English on personal basis.“

7. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„So no, it was not hard at all to adapt to better living in Southern California paradise.“

8. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„My husband started immediately as a tennis instructor since he spoke English. I was staying at home mom taking care of family and learning English. After we moved to the Chicago area we started kitchen and bathroom remodelling business and within one year we were living a very comfortable life. America was and still is very good for people to start a business with not much money. But we had to work hard and long hours until everything was established. Currently, I am retired and enjoy my life with friends, living close to the beach and do whatever I want to.“

9. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

„As I said, my husband did speak English I did not. I went daily to 2 hours of class and study more at home. Had to learn the difference between spelling

and pronunciation, do a lot of reading with dictionary constantly in my hand and within 2 months I could communicate with people and after one year I could read the whole newspaper because there is different English than in regular magazines.“

10. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„I do not regret leaving than Czechoslovakia but regret leaving my family behind. It is easy to adjust if you coming to a better place where you can have, do and say anything you want and in a short time.“

11. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„I am not a member of any Czech club. There are not many Czechs in San Diego. Most of them are in the Midwest area and South.“

12. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„I went visit Trebic and Brno 2x. First time in 1994 and then 3 years ago. In 1994 it was a short visit, just 10 days. My mom and some relatives were still living but I did not have contact with any of my friends from school since I did not know where they live. But it was pleasant and brought many memories from childhood.“

13. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions?

„Yes, I am trying to keep Czech tradition special Christmas celebration, cooking Czech food, decorating the house with Czech crystal and "cibulkac" and also telling my friends and special my two granddaughters about life before I came here. They both learn cooking Czech food and some words. Unfortunately, they live in Florida so I don't see them that often.“

Interview no. 8

Name: Harry Schwarzkopf

Age: 88

Current city/state of residence: Port St. Lucie, Florida, USA

Questions:

1. Why did you decide to emigrate to the United States? And how long have you been living there? In which state/city have you been living?

„ I along emigrated with my parents because of political situations developing. I have lived in America since the age of 7. I lived in Brooklyn, New York and Long Island, New York.“

2. Where did you live in Bohemia?

„I lived in Tábor.“

3. Did you come to the US alone or with some other family members?

„I came to America with my mother and father.“

4. How was the situation in your homeland at that time?

„Situation was dire. The Czech Republic was overrun and was made to a puppet state.“

5. How was the situation in the US at that time? What were your first impressions?

„We had freedom, liberty and justice. Times were hard, jobs were scarce. It was difficult to communicate with new friends and classmates. It took about a half a year to learn to speak and understand English.“

6. Was it hard for you to adapt to a new culture?

„In elementary school, mathematics was easy but the rest was frustrating because I did not understand what they were doing.“

7. Was it hard for you to get a job? What is your current profession?

„Too young to worry about employment. My profession was an economic statistician but I succeeded as an entrepreneur in the die business.“

8. Was it hard for you to learn the language or did you already have some knowledge of English?

„It was not difficult to learn English as much as you play with friends and of necessity you pick it up rather quickly. I knew one word in English – „table“.

But being a Czech scholar, with a first-grade education, I spelt it „tegel. It was the only word I knew.“

9. Have you ever regretted leaving your homeland?

„Of course there was always a soft spot in my heart for „Kde domov můj“ but you get acquainted with new surrounding and roll with the punches.“

10. Are you a member of any Czech club or organization in the US?

„Yes, we were members of the „Masaryk club“ in New York City. Now I belong to the facebook group „Bohemians in America“.

11. Have you visited the Czech Republic since you moved to the US?

„I have returned to Česká Republika over a dozen times. I love the liberation parade through Plzeň to Rokycany.“

12. Do you keep up with any Czech traditions?

„Unfortunately, there are too few Czechs in Florida. Most of them are in Chicago, Texas and the Upper Mid-West. So it is difficult to keep up with traditions. Škoda.

6.1 Summary of interview responses

The interviews were conducted with 8 respondents who answered about 12 questions regarding their emigration to the United States. The interviews show that the majority of people emigrated to the USA after the year 1968. Thus, they belong to the group of emigrants of the third wave of migration, i.e. after the events of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia after 1968. Their reasons were in all cases political. However, there are also interviews with respondents from the first wave of migration during the Second World War, as well as emigres of the second wave of migration after the Second World War. The second wave includes three respondents who emigrated before 1968. Their reasons were the same as those of the two previous migration waves.

Overall, the average age of all respondents is between 71-75 years, which means that they were teenagers during the time of their emigration. There are, of course, exceptions, when some of the respondents stated that they left Czechoslovakia between the ages of 33-35, along with with their families, i.e. the wife/husband and children. The most common final destinations of their emigration were Florida and California, however, also Georgia, Illinois, Kansas and Nebraska.

Most of these interviews agreed on the answer to the question about the situation in Czechoslovakia, which forced them to leave their homeland. They describe this situation as hardcore communism when they had no freedom of speech. They felt oppressed by the Communist regime and were constantly watched. They did not have the opportunity to say and do what they wanted, and they were not able to go or travel where they wanted.

According to respondents, the situation in the US was the total opposite. They reported that the US was a country where they could speak freely and say their opinions, do what they wanted. It was a prosperous country with huge opportunities. Respondents also said that, unlike in Czechoslovakia, they had

everything there. Of course, there have been cases where respondents described their first impressions as not very good, but later everything turned out better.

As for the process of assimilation after arriving in the US, most respondents had either no English language knowledge or very low knowledge. Knowledge of the language was the most important thing in the process of their assimilation, and therefore adaptation in the new environment was initially difficult for them until they learned how to speak English and could thus use it in everyday life. They watched movies and used various books to learn English and mostly taught themselves at home. In some cases, parents were learning English together with their children who had English lessons at school. Usually, it took them about half a year to one year to learn and use the language in their daily lives. Some, however, learned the language faster because of the necessity. Some were fortunate to know or have someone who helped them with everything in the beginnings. Both with language teaching and financial and material aspects, which significantly made the adaptation easier.

As it was already mentioned, knowledge of the language was a necessary thing in integrating into a new environment. People had to learn to speak English as quickly as possible so they could find a job. Some say they were lucky right from the beginning and found a good job. But for some of them, it was harder. They often had to move, so they experienced many different professions in their lives. They worked in various business and economic sectors, as well as in education as professors at universities.

When asked if they regret their decision to leave their homeland and start a new life across the ocean, most of them answered that although the beginnings were not quite easy, they do not regret their decision. The situation in Czechoslovakia was unbearable. But what they do regret is the separation from the family that remained in Czechoslovakia. Nowadays, the Czech-Americans are satisfied with their lives in the United States, as they answered they do not regret emigrating to the United States. However, they return to the Czech Republic, and I was surprised that quite often. Some of them said they are also

members of various Czech clubs in the US. However, people who live in Florida or San Diego do not have many Czech compatriot clubs in their surrounding, so they are only members of some Facebook groups that exist for Czech compatriots living in the US. What I would also like to mention is that Dr Míla Šašková-Pierce (Interview No.6) mentioned that she along with her husband are members of many Czech clubs (further described in the interview, pp. 53-57) and what is worth mentioning is that she was appointed by the Czech government as an Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Nebraska.

I was also very surprised that many respondents still observe some Czech traditions, such as Christmas and Easter traditions. They also listen to Czech music and cook Czech dishes. Others, on the other hand, visit Czech restaurants in America or various events organized by Czech organizations.

I found the respondents for my interviews in the facebook group „Bohemians in America“ where I made a post introducing myself and this thesis. What I was the most surprised about was the number of the people that were willing to do an interview with me, or just to share some picture and stories. The interviews were conducted mostly via e-mail, facebook. Three of them were realized by an online call via Skype. With this, I would like to express my thanks to all of the respondents that were willing to share such interesting stories about their process of emigration to the United States.

7 CONCLUSION

The objective of this bachelor thesis was to describe the Czech migration to the United States during the 20th century and to find out the reasons and circumstances that led Czech people to leave their homeland and emigrate to the United States. In order to achieve this goal, the author of the thesis carried out interviews with people who emigrated to the United States during the 20th century. These interviews can be found at the end of the practical section.

This work is divided into two sections, the first being theoretical, the second practical. The theoretical section of this thesis deals with the history of Czech migration to the US from the very beginning. The author introduces the history and provides information on each century until the 20th century. The author describes the reasons for emigration, the process of getting to the United States, as well as the process of assimilation in a new environment. However, the author mainly concentrates on 20th-century migration, which is considered to be the peak of emigration to the US, as a consequence of an unbearable political situation developing at that time. Among other things, the activity of Czech compatriots in the US is stated. The author describes their contribution to preserving Czech compatriot identity in the United States.

The practical section of the thesis concentrates on the end of the 20th century and contemporary Czech-Americans. In the beginning, the author presents the Czech-American clubs and organizations, as well as the Czech press in America. Nevertheless, the greatest contribution of this work are the interviews with Czech emigrants of the 20th century that enriched the practical section of this thesis. Respondents answered a few questions in which they shared their stories. The interviews give the reader an overview of the reasons people had for their emigration, describe the situation in both Czechoslovakia and the United States of America. Furthermore, people share how it was for them to adapt to new life in the US, a country with a completely different language from their native language. The respondents also talk about their jobs and careers.

These interviews can help the reader of this thesis to imagine and understand better the process of emigration and the subsequent life of emigres in the United States, as it was previously described in the theoretical part of the thesis. At the end of the practical section is a summary of all the interviews where the author describes and compares the answers of all respondents.

In this thesis, the author worked mainly with printed sources, as much literature concerning this topic had been already written. Most of the printed sources are written in the Czech language; with some exceptions, sources are also written in English language. The author also worked with internet sources that involved mostly literature in electronic form, compatriot websites, dictionaries, anthologies, as well as the official information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic website.

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9 ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with Czech emigration to the United States of America in the 20th century. Among other things, it focuses on the history of migration that preceded, the reasons for emigration, the process of emigration to America and the subsequent process of assimilation in the new environment. The second part of the thesis includes interviews with 9 Czech emigrants who decided to leave their home country for the United States in the 20th century and who were willing to share their personal experiences in an interview. The respondents explain their reasons for emigration, the process of their assimilation in the new American environment. Furthermore, they describe the situation in Czechoslovakia at that time, as well as the situation in the United States.

10 RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá migrací Čechů do Spojených států amerických ve 20. století. Mimo jiné se také zaměřuje na historii migrace, která tomu předcházela, důvody pro emigraci, proces emigrace do Ameriky a následný proces asimilace v novém prostředí. Druhá část této práce se věnuje rozhovorům s 9 českými emigranty, kteří ve 20. století opustili svou rodnou zemi a odešli do Spojených států amerických, a kteří byli ochotni sdílet své zkušenosti v rozhovoru, který jsem s nimi provedla. Respondenti uvádí své důvody k emigraci, popisují situaci v Československu a zároveň ve Spojených státech v době své emigrace, a také proces jejich asimilace v novém prostředí.