Jaroslav Miller

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD: CZECH(OSLOVAK) EXILE IN AUSTRALIA, 1948-1989[1]

One of the letters dispatched in summer 1982 from the New York headquarters of the anti-communist resistance, the Council of Free Czechoslovakia (*Rada svobodného Československa*), outspokenly and mercilessly summarised the peripheral role of Australia in the eyes of leading Czech and Slovak exile politicians:

> Nobody is interested in Australia here […]. Most colleagues see the Czechoslovak exile in Australia as absolutely isolated, coping with specific problems and having little in common with the Czechoslovak exile in the USA, Canada or Western Europe. […] Everybody is aware that the fortune of Czechoslovakia will be decided here.[2]

With its shocking expression of aloofness towards the exile community based in a distant and politically more peripheral country, the letter shows how the strife-torn Council of Free Czechoslovakia eventually gave up its coordinating role within the exile movement around the globe.

While the discourteous judgement perhaps aptly reflected reality, it was simultaneously rather paradoxical. True that their provision of political, financial and ideological support made the United States and Western Europe the undisputed centres of Czech and Slovak anti-communist resistance, while geographically remote Australia with its strong trade unions and left-wing intellectual elites was considered an insignificant territory in terms of the struggle against communist regimes in Europe. And yet, Australia – mostly for economic, military and demographic reasons – renounced its restrictive immigration policy after the Second World War and went on to receive more Central and Eastern European refugees and displaced persons than any other country in the world. During the critical period between 1947 and 1952, more than 170,000 displaced persons from the Baltic and Balkan countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, but also from Germany and Austria (often

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[1] This article is the outcome of the research project "The Alternative Centre of Czech Political Exile" (Fond pro podporu vědecké činnosti FF UP 2018/10). The title refers to the 18th-century "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray that idealises the rural, sequestered life far from the rush and noise of the great world. The elegy also inspired Thomas Hardy, who gave the same title to his literary masterpiece.

[2] "O Austrálii je tady malý zájem […]. Většina pracovníků prostě pokládá čs. exil v Austrálii za naprosto izolovaný, mající specifické problémy a mající hodně málo společného s čs. exilem v USA, Kanadě či Západní Evropě […]. Každý si je zde vědom toho, že o čs. osudu se bude rozhodovat zde." Centrum pro československá exilová studia [Centre for Czechoslovak Exile Studies, hereafter CČES], Olomouc, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci [Palacký University Olomouc], Fond Rada svobodného Československa 1949-1983 [The Council of Free Czechoslovakia 1949-1983 Collection], Box 89, letter to Colonel Josef Novák from 11 July 1982.

former Nazis and SS men escaping justice) arrived in Australia to become Australian citizens. The lists of passengers aboard incoming ships testified to a multitude of nationalities seeking a new home in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide or Perth. In June and July 1950, for instance, the *Anna Salén* transported refugees from Central, Southern and Eastern Europe – including 772 Poles, 175 Czechs and Slovaks, 147 Latvians, 102 Ukrainians, 41 Hungarians, 32 Estonians and the same number of Lithuanians – to Australia.[3]

According to the 1954 Australian national census, the country provided a new home to a community of some 12,000 Czechs and Slovaks fleeing the communist regime, with the influx of refugees from other Central and Eastern European countries comparable in size or even substantially higher.[4]

Table 1: Numbers of persons born in selected Central European countries (data from the Australian population census, 1947-1986)[5]

Year	Czechoslovakia	Poland	Hungary	Germany	Austria
1947	1,484	6,573	1,227	14,567	4,219
1954	12,680	56,594	14,602	65,422	10,868
1961	12,131	60,049	30,553	109,315	23,807
1971	16,602	59,700	29,160	110,811	23,941
1986	17,876	67,658	27,202	114,818	22,604

The somewhat belittling tone of the Council's letter also failed to do justice to the richness of the exile culture and community life of Czechs and Slovaks in Australia. With almost 70 periodicals published between 1948 and 1989 as well as dozens of political organisations, sports clubs and cultural associations, the Czech and Slovak exile community formed a genuine national subculture outmatching exile activities in many other countries.[6]

In exploring the anti-communist exile, Czech historiography has hitherto rather one-sidedly focused on (auto)biographies of leading exile politicians, the history of institutions and/or exile culture.[7] At the same time, attention has primarily been

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[3] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna [Libri Prohibiti Library], Praha, Anna Salén – a commemorative issue of Czechoslovak emigrants sailing to Australia, 1950, 6.

[4] *Jupp,* James/*York,* Barry: Birthplaces of the Australian People: Colonial and Commonwealth Censuses, 1828-1991. Canberra 1995, 43.

[5] *Ibid.* 35, 43, 51, 53, 66.

[6] *Formanová,* Lucie/*Gruntorád,* Jiří/*Přibáň,* Michal: Exilová periodika: Katalog periodik českého a slovenského exilu a krajanských tisků vydávaných po roce 1945 [Periodicals of Exile: A Catalogue of Czech and Slovak Periodicals and Compatriot Press Published after 1945]. Praha 1999; *Gilson,* Miriam/*Zubrycki,* Jerzy: The Foreign-Language Press in Australia, 1848-1964. Canberra 1967, 26-27.

[7] See for example *Polišenská,* Milada: Zapomenutý "nepřítel" Josef Josten [Josef Josten, the Forgotten "Enemy"]. Praha 2009; *Kosatík,* Pavel: Ferdinand Peroutka: Pozdější život (1938-1978) [Ferdinand Peroutka: His Later Life (1983-1978)]. Praha 2011; *Jirásek,* Zde-

given to traditional and politically more relevant exile destinations like the United States, Canada and Western Europe. By studying the Czech and Slovak emigrant communities in a peripheral region far from key exile institutions and power centres, this article follows a "history from below" approach. Seeking refuge in a geographically distant and sparsely populated country, Czechs and Slovaks had to build their exile institutions afresh and wage their anti-communist campaign largely independently of the loci of the Czechoslovak resistance movement. The remoteness of Australia and the wildness of its nature thus contributed to the rise of a double mentality not found among exile communities in Europe, since the social status of political refugees was closely linked to the pioneering and civilising ethos of a frontier society.[8] While this article sets out to highlight the unique nature of the Czech and Slovak exile movement in Australia, it also aims to provide the first ever overview of exile life in a given territory in all its complexity.

Despite its singularity, the story of Czech and Slovak exiles in Australia may also serve as an ideal example reflecting certain typical issues encountered by exile communities worldwide, namely the conflict of generations, the tension between Slovak nationalism and Czechoslovak federalism, and the controversial legacy of the party politics that shaped the constitutional life of the First Czechoslovak Republic.[9]

Australia as Terra Incognita: Czechoslovak Exile Misplaced?

Given the continuous migratory flows to Western Europe, the United States and Canada, those countries hosted – beginning in the nineteenth century – numerous Czech and Slovak communities that preserved their own subcultures and asserted a considerable influence upon local and state politics. Tomáš Masaryk's reputation and good contacts with the American financial and political elite notwithstanding, the emergence of a new Czechoslovak statehood in 1918 would have been inconceivable

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něk/*Trapl,* Miloš: Exilová politika v letech 1948-1956: Počátky politické organizovanosti a činnosti poúnorové emigrace a vznik Rady svobodného Československa [Politics in Exile in the Years 1948-1956: The Beginnings of the Political Organisation and Activities of Emigrees after February and the Creation of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia]. Olomouc 1996; *Papež,* Josef: Československý Orel v exilu: Župa svatováclavská, 1948-1990 [The Czechoslovak Eagle in Exile: St.Wenceslas' County, 1948-1990]. Brno 2005; *Rechcígl,* Miloslav ml.: Pro vlast: Padesát let společnosti pro vědy a umění (SVU) [For the Home Country: The 50th Anniversary of the Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU)]. Praha 2012; *Michálek,* Slavomír: Jan Papánek: Politik, diplomat, humanista [Jan Papánek: Politician, Diplomat, Humanist]. Bratislava 1997; *Paleček,* Pavel: Ministr Hubert Ripka a jeho osobní archiv: Inventář osobního fondu: Dokumenty [Minister Hubert Ripka and His Private Archive: Inventory and Personal Fund: Documents]. Brno 2000 (Prameny a studie k dějinám československého exilu 1948-1989, 4); *Waldauf,* Jan: Sokol: Malé dějiny velké myšlenky II [The Sokol: A Small History of Great Ideas II]. Luhačovice 2010.

[8] See an influential frontier thesis produced by Frederick Jackson Turner in his 1893 essay *The Significance of the Frontier in American History.* Turner argues that the forging of modern American society was, among other things, an outcome of the clash between the civilisation of new colonists and the savagery of the wilderness.

[9] *Miller,* Jaroslav/*Burešová,* Jana/*Trapl,* Miloš: Český exil v Austrálii (1948-1989) [Czech Exile in Australia (1948-1989)]. Praha 2016.

without the efficient agitation, lobbying and lavish financial contributions by Czechs and Slovaks who had settled in the United States for decades.[10] The post-1948 exiles could thus rely on the existence of a dense network of associations, clubs and organisations that often boasted considerable financial resources. Mobilised by the communist takeover, these Czech and Slovak settlements abroad were capable of providing immediate social assistance to refugees and support for the political activities of exile anti-communism.

None of this applied to Australia, however, which until the Second World War retained its image as a half-civilised, distant and mysterious country with large areas still waiting to be discovered and properly explored.[11] Aware of the reputation of the continent as a frontier territory offering nothing but a hard life in rather primitive conditions, the Australian government launched an extensive propaganda campaign in German and Austrian refugee camps, promising an auspicious future in a land of prosperity presented as an "alternative Europe" or "alternative Czechoslovakia". One of the broadsheets distributed in 50,000 copies under the title *Glück in der Neuen Heimat* (Fortune in the New Home) described a happy and sun-kissed country with unlimited career prospects.[12]

Other leaflets, posters and radio broadcasts spoke of Australian cities and towns with

> […] many Czech restaurants, coffeehouses, delicatessens, butcher shops, garages and other businesses and companies […]. On every corner you see a Czech firm providing car services, household chores, radio or shoe repairs. […] Sometimes you ask yourself: Where am I? In Australia or in Czechoslovakia?[13]

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[10] Most recently *Hájková,* Dagmar: "Naše česká věc": Češi v Americe za první světové války ["Our Czech Cause": Czechs in America during World War I]. Praha 2011; *Polách,* Vladimír: Krajané v USA a druhá světová válka: Studie na pozadí krajanského tisku [Our Compatriots in the USA and World War II: A Study on the Backgrounds of the Compatriot Press]. Olomouc 2017, 51-58; *Soubigou,* Alain: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Praha, Litomyšl 2004, 199-219.

[11] The public in Bohemia learned about Australia mostly from travel books published by the late 19th- and early 20th-century travellers, adventurers and scientists including Čeněk Paclt, Alois Topič, Josef Kořenský, Josef Ladislav Erben, Jiří Baum and Jiří V. Daneš, and Karel Domin. For a comprehensive overview of Australian nature and civilisation, see especially *Paclt,* Čeněk: Cesty světem: Příhody a zkušenosti na cestách po Americe, Austrálii, Novém Zélandě a jižní Africe [Travels Around the World: Stories and Experiences Made During Trips Through America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa]. Praha 1954; *John,* Jaromír: Australská dobrodružství Aloise Topiče [The Australian Adventures of Alois Topič]. Praha 1969; *Kořenský,* Josef: K protinožcům: Cesta do Austrálie, Tasmánie, na Nový Zéland, Ostrovy Přátelské, Samojské a Vitijské a návrat Celebesem, Javou, Korálovým mořem, Siamem, Čínou, Žaponskem, Koreou a Sibiří [To the Antipodes: A Journey to Australia, Tasmania and Back via Celebes, Java, the Coral Sea, Siam, China, Japan, Korea and Siberia]. Vol. 1. Praha 1904; *Erben,* Josef Ladislav: Půl století světoběžcem [A Globetrotter for Half a Century]. Praha 1986; *Baum,* Jiří: Okolo zeměkoule autem a lodí [Around the Globe by Car and Ship]. Brno 2007.

[12] *Sluga,* Glenda: Bonegilla: A Place of No Hope. Parkville 1988, 6.

[13] "[…] celá řada českých restaurací, kaváren, lahůdkářských a řeznických obchodů, opraváren aut a ostatních řemeslných závodů a podniků […]. Na každém kroku se setkáte s nějakou českou firmou – kde jeden provádí opravu aut, domovního zařízení, rádií, zho-

Australia thus presented itself as an ideal choice, a promised land where "all refugees have dozens of career options every day."[14] To encourage immigration from Europe, the recruitment campaign also stressed the willingness of Australians to fully adopt European culture and implement all achievements and refinements of European life. Exile from Czechoslovakia (and other European countries) was thus destined to play a historical role in the civilising of a quickly developing country aiming to become a new Europe. Along similar lines, *Radio Free Europe* reported in May 1953 that Australian trade unions were officially approaching Czech immigrants to learn more about social legislation in prewar Czechoslovakia with the aim of implementing the same model in Australia.[15] The campaign also emphasized the individual stories of Czechs invited to Australia as pioneers of culture. In this respect, the dazzling career of Rudolf Pekárek (1900-1974), director of symphony orchestras in Western Australia and Queensland, served as a symbol of the civilising role refugees from Czechoslovakia were said to play in Australia, as "no Europeans likely rank higher in the eyes of Australians than Czechoslovaks."[16]

Yet the reality *in situ* differed strikingly from the propagandist image of a happy and prosperous state since Australia had no long-term integration strategies and lacked the experience and infrastructure necessary to accommodate the needs of tens of thousands of displaced persons from diverse European countries. Temporarily housed in barracks in former military camps like Bonegilla (Victoria), immigrants remained isolated from Australian society for weeks.[17] Because most displaced persons had to sign a two-year work contract, they were subsequently frequently offered menial and low-paid jobs shunned by Australians. Regardless of their qualifications, doctors, lawyers and civil engineers were sent to mines, forests and farms often located far from civilisation and inhabited places. The memoirs of Jindřich Nermuť, an interwar Czech politician, MP for the *Lidová strana* (People's Party) and post-1948 political refugee, testify to the gloomy social situation of displaced persons in postwar Australia:

> We were housed in sheet-metal barracks with no interior walls. Cold during the night and hot during the day. […] As for our qualifications, they had only one stamp: manual labourer. For two years we were listed as workmen in civil engineering, forests, railroad works and industry.[18]

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tovuje a opravuje boty […] a tak si chvílemi říkáte: kde vlastně jsem? V Austrálii, nebo doma?". CČES, Olomouc, Osobní fond Petra Hrubého [Petr Hrubý Collection], Radio Free Europe: Australia, Box L3, broadcast on 13 February 1952, 6, 9.

[14] *Ibid.* 6.

[15] CČES, Olomouc, Osobní fond Petra Hrubého, Radio Free Europe: Australia, Box L3, broadcast on 7 May 1953, 4.

[16] *Ibid.* 3-4.

[17] See *Sluga:* Bonegilla (cf. fn. 12).

[18] "Byli jsme ubytováni v plechových domech, které neměly žádné vnitřní stěny. V noci v nich byla zima, ve dne zase horko […] na to, jaké máme povolání, našli jenom razítko: Dělník. Byli jsme zapsáni jako dělníci na 2 roky do stavebnictví, v lese, na dráze i v hospodářství." *Černík,* Bohumil: Jindřich Nermuť: Poslanec Vysočiny [Jindřich Nermuť: Delegate of Vysočina]. Moravská Třebová 1995, 23.

Similarly, an anonymous exile explained his intention to leave Australia due to the alleged disdain of Australians towards academic education:

> As a Czech doctor, I do not have the slightest chance here. I do not intend to die as a general hand in a factory, believe me. Many of my colleagues will follow my example, I think, because such a problem does not exist for us in the United States.[19]

The two-year contracts may have been motivated by the strong Australian trade unions' fear that the immigrants would deprive the local middle and lower middle class of jobs. As another Czechoslovak refugee, Božena Šamánková (1906-2002), describes in her autobiographical book *Perpetuum mobile,* the friction between immigrants and local workers sometimes threatened to erupt into open conflict:

> Anton, Felix and Jura were good enough for the worst job. […] Nobody offered them friendship. […] They were foreigners and Australian workers did not want to have anything to do with them. Toník saw them covertly taking leaflets out of their overall pockets and talking in secret.[20]

Moreover, unaccustomed as yet to daily coexistence with numerous foreign communities from diverse cultural environments, the Australian society soon exhibited an inclination towards xenophobia and nationalist bias. Often the panic was ignited by local media describing immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe as "bloody Balts". Similarly, the evening paper *The Sun* referred to displaced persons arriving on the Australian shores as the "worst types", identifying them as "Nazis, Nazi collaborators, communists, ruffians, prostitutes […]. European women hosted dark-skinned sailors overnight in their cabins. Passengers did not wash themselves […], mothers did not care for their own children."[21] The anti-immigration sentiment of the Australian public tragically culminated in the case of the young Slovak Karol Tapci, who was charged with the murder of a farmer in Western Australia. The precarious nature of the evidence and doubtful testimonies triggered a lively public debate over Tapci's guilt. On 8 July 1952, the *Sunday Times* published an article entitled "Tapci Must Not Hang", summarising the case and expressing serious doubts concerning the accusation against the young Slovak. At the same time, the author prophetically concluded that Tapci, being a foreigner without useful contacts and friends, would eventually be victimised and sentenced to death in order to satisfy the public.[22]

As the widespread xenophobic attitude toward foreigners was to be moderated by way of sustained pressure calling for their cultural, economic and social assimilation,

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[19] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Hlas domova, 31 March 1952, 13.

[20] "Anton, Felix a Jura byli dobří na tu nejhorší práci. […] Nikdo jim nenabídl přátelství. […] Byli to forejni a dělníci s nimi neměli nic společného. Toník viděl, jak opatrně vytahují nějaké letáky z kapes svých overalů a tiše debatují." *Šamánková,* Božena: Perpetuum mobile. Petersham 1995, 9.

[21] *Slouka,* Zdeněk: Jdi po skryté stopě: Lidské kroky politickou krajinou exilu [Walk on a Hidden Trail: Human Footsteps in the Exile Political Landscape]. Praha 2009, 343-344.

[22] Sunday Times, Perth, 8 July 1952, 1. Decades later, Tapci's case was investigated by the Australian journalist *Austen,* Tom: The Stranger: Crime and Prejudice in Australia. Perth 1992.

the Australian government observed with displeasure the establishment of numerous associations and exile periodicals supporting the national identity and anti-communist ethos of certain immigrant groups. Seen by public authorities as "New Australians" rather than Czechs, Poles or Hungarians, they were expected to abandon their native languages and fully accept the Australian way of life. To this end, the government issued a series of regulations including a law prescribing that at least twenty-five per cent of all texts published in exile newspapers had to be in English.[23]

Given the almost complete absence of prewar Czech and Slovak settlement in Australia, the exiles also lacked the necessary background to facilitate their integration into domestic society and help to establish the contours of exile politics through existing organisational platforms. Although Czechoslovak associations had been founded in Sydney and Melbourne in 1927 and 1939 respectively, their pro-communist stance and active collaboration with the Czechoslovak secret police effectively precluded closer relationships with political exiles. The lively debate launched in 1957 on the pages of the leading Czechoslovak exile newspaper in Australia, *Hlas domova* (The Voice of the Homeland) clearly demonstrated that the ideological gap between the two waves of immigration simply could not be bridged. Entirely oblivious regarding the brutality and oppressive nature of the political regime in Czechoslovakia, one of the prewar Czech immigrants voiced her naive belief that

> the situation in our country cannot be that bad […]. In my view, anybody wishing to return home can freely go […]. All recent letters and news […] testify to a significant improvement on all sides, and I believe that if you are ready to reconcile, you could go home without any worries.[24]

The leftist orientation and pro-Soviet stance of postwar Australian society were additional factors that impeded the political activities of Czechoslovak exiles – at least until the mid-1950s. Prior to the so-called "Petrov Affair" (1954), which revealed extensive espionage efforts by the Soviet regime, the Australian government intentionally pursued a non-confrontation policy towards Moscow. And although the affair caused a long-term political crisis between the two countries and weakened the popularity of Australian Marxists, latent sympathy for "the socialist experiment" remained widespread until the 1970s.[25]

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[23] Památník národního písemnictví, Literární archiv [Museum of Czech Literature, Literary Archive, hereafter PNP, LA], Litoměřice, Váňa František a Hlas domova – redakční archiv [František Váňa Collection], letter from the Australian Department of Immigration to František Váňa, editor-in-chief of *Hlas domova,* informing him that a license to publish the Czechoslovak exile newspapers had been granted, 7 July 1951. No inventory number.

[24] "[…] není možné, aby poměry v našich Čechách byly dosud tak špatné […]. Já jsem toho náhledu, že všichni, kteří chtějí domů zpět, mohou jeti […]. Poslední dopisy, jež docházejí ze všech stran, svědčí o opravdovém zlepšení na všech stranách, a já věřím, že kdybyste se začali vyrovnávat smírnou cestou, že všichni bez obav byste mohli zpět." Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Hlas domova, 13 May 1957, 5.

[25] *Hrubý,* Petr: Nebezpeční snílci: Australská levice a Československo [Dangerous Dreamers: The Australian Left and Czechoslovakia]. Brno 2007, 123-149. On the consequences of the Vladimír Petrov affair for Czechoslovak diplomats in Sydney, see: Archiv bezpečnostních složek [Security Services Archive], Praha, Svazková agenda, Ministerstvo vnitra, I. správa, 11. odbor, 2. oddělení, registrační číslo 10488/304 [Stocks of Volumes, Ministry of the Inte-

Postwar Australia therefore embodied a paradox not observable in the USA or Western Europe: While the country actively supported mass immigration mostly from communist states in Central and Eastern Europe, the asylum seekers from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary or the Baltic countries determined to actively resist the totalitarian regimes in their homelands soon found that Australia was both unable and unwilling to meet their expectations. Due to its geographic isolation from the main centres of world politics, its largely leftist orientation, its unpreparedness to cope with the political ambitions of numerous minorities and national groups and – most importantly – its insistence on the full assimilation of immigrants, the country was far from a dreamland for the exiles. Soon after arriving, some Central and Eastern European refugees therefore left Australia again in hopes of finding better conditions for their political goals in the USA or Western Europe. Leopold Rozbořil (1916-2007), later chairman of the *Československá národní rada americká* (Czechoslovak National Council in America), justified his decision to settle in the USA in his memoirs: "In the early 1950s, there were no favourable conditions for our political action. The government and people of Australia were too far from Europe to be interested in our issues. Some even voiced their disagreement."[26] Those who remained, however, established a dense web of Czech and Slovak political associations, cultural organisations and sports clubs, thus creating a genuine and rich exile subculture that survived until 1989.

The Exile Community or Masaryk Czechoslovakia?

In September 1953, the exile newspaper *Hlas domova* published an impressive summary of Czech and Slovak clubs and societies in Australia:

> Headquarters of Czechoslovak Democratic Organisations 1, Czechoslovak clubs and national associations 8, Sokol district 1, local Sokol associations 6, Orel – Pacific Region 1, Orel association 1, Skaut 1, Cyril and Methodius League 3, Christian Academy 3, Religious Community of Protestants 1, sports clubs 7 (including two purely Slovak), Czech Culture Friends Club 1, University Student Union 1, Union of Political Prisoners 1, Association of Commercial Engineers 1, Australian Slovak Association (separatist) 1+4, Czechoslovak political parties 11, Czechoslovak section of Australian Liberal Party (Blaník, Vltava) 2, Czechoslovak section of Australian Labour Party 1, Union of Czechoslovak Refugees 1, Economic Council of Free Czechoslovakia 1, clubs of prewar immigrants 2. Altogether 60.[27]

Mentally rooted in the past, most exiles resorted to the traditional organisational platforms and political paradigms of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938). In doing so, they created a virtual Masaryk Czechoslovakia that also served as an idealised example of democratic and liberal statehood as compared to the inhuman and tyrannical communist rule at home. By endorsing the prewar political regime,

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rior, I. Administration, 11. Portfolio, 2. Department, Registry No. 10488/304]. Interrogation of Jaroslav Kafka, vice-consul in Sydney, 14 June 1957, 1.

[26] "Na počátku padesátých let nebyla dobrá půda pro nás politický boj. Australská vláda a lid byli příliš vzdáleni od Evropy, než aby se zajímali o náš problém. Někteří ukázali i svůj nesouhlas." *Rozbořil,* Leopold: Z války do exilu [From the War to Exile]. Praha 1994, 116.

[27] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Hlas domova, 21 September 1953, 8.

the exiles proposed an alternative version of Czechoslovak history in the hope that it would be publicly accepted and applied in the future following the ultimate collapse of communism. Abruptly discontinued at home due to Nazi occupation and communist rule, this Czechoslovak statehood and its continuity, though extraterritorial, were represented by the exile diaspora worldwide. This interpretation offered a completely new narrative of the national past based on the imagined and uninterrupted historical ties connecting Masaryk Czechoslovakia, the post-1948 political exile and the anticipated democratic society to be erected one day on the ruins of the lawless communist state.

The continuity with the prewar political settlement was symbolised above all else by the composition of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia, the leading exile authority based in New York whose members had either belonged to the political and military establishment of interwar Czechoslovakia linked to traditional party politics (Petr Zenkl, Josef Lettrich, Štefan Osuský, Sergěj Ingr and others) or embodied the cultural legacy and ethos of the Masaryk republic (journalist Ferdinand Peroutka, Jaroslav Stránský). Since the Council initially wielded significant informal influence upon the exile communities spread across the world, the organisational structure of political bodies in most countries essentially followed the same pattern. This model, however, revived all the negative aspects of political life in Masaryk Czechoslovakia, namely party particularism and bitter disputes among democratic parties over a number of issues. Over the course of time, the notorious unwillingness to seek consensual solutions for the sake of national unity paralysed most representative bodies of Czechoslovaks in exile, including the Council of Free Czechoslovakia.[28] In Australia, the same applied to the *Ústředí čs. demokratických organisací v Austrálii a na Novém Zélandě* (Headquarters of the Czechoslovak Democratic Organisations in Australia and New Zealand), which claimed a leading role in the exile movement but eventually failed as a result of repeated conflicts among political parties and gradually fell into oblivion.[29] In late autumn 1952, *Hlas domova* published a rigorous judgement passed by one of its readers that may have been shared by many Czechoslovaks: "I heard about the Headquarters two years ago when it was established and now I learn that another meeting is being held. In the meantime, presumably nothing has happened."[30]

The failures of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia and the *Ústředí čs. demokratických organisací v Austrálii a na Novém Zélandě* seem to have been a consequence of the idea that anti-communist activities were to be monopolised and coordinated exclusively by political parties and exiled politicians who made or began their careers during the interwar period. This notion was also the reason why the political map of

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[28] On the rivalry among political parties in exile, see most recently *Kosatík:* Ferdinand Peroutka (cf. fn. 7). – *Polišenská:* Zapomenutý "nepřítel" 141-253 (cf. fn. 7).

[29] On political conflicts within the *Ústředí,* see *Miller/Burešová/Trapl:* Český exil v Austrálii 59-72 (cf. fn. 9).

[30] "O nějakém Ústředí jsem slyšel před dvěma lety, když se zakládalo, a teď se dovídám, že opět schůzuje. Mezi tím asi nebylo nic." Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Hlas domova, 24 November 1952, 8.

Masaryk Czechoslovakia was replicated in post-1948 exile politics (including the parties that had formed the so-called National Front/Národní fronta in 1945 to 1947 together with the communists). Eleven political parties emerged in Australia in the early 1950s, with the National Socialist Party, the People's Party, the National Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party boasting the largest numbers of members. Some of them even issued (albeit on an irregular basis) their own newspapers, like *Náš Cíl* (Our Goal), *Jiskra* (Spark) or *Nový Den* (New Day).[31] The vision of political parties assuming a role at the forefront of the resistance against the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia was short-lived, however, and most parties soon lapsed into inactivity. Firstly, the coordination of party members dispersed across the vast territory of Australia proved virtually impossible. Secondly, the anti-communist activities organised solely on a political basis made no sense to most Czechs and Slovaks who held no party membership and legitimately feared the fragmentation of the expatriate community as a result of narrow-minded party interests.

Instead, the nuclei of exile life were formed by the dozens of local and regional associations emerging throughout the continent, including the sparsely populated Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia. Many of them, including *Sokol* (Falcon), *Orel* (Eagle), *Československá obec legionářská* (Czechoslovak Ex-Servicemens' League) and *Skaut* (the Scout), epitomised the Czech (and to a certain extent Slovak) national identity and the very ethos of independent Masaryk Czechoslovakia. With the communist regime systematically suppressing all vestiges of interwar Czechoslovak democracy, these organisations could survive only in exile. Quite paradoxically, their persecution at home made it possible for these associations to spread globally, with Czechoslovak exiles founding local branches of *Sokol* or *Československá obec legionářská* worldwide. In the 1950s, the regional *Sokol* associations established themselves as the undisputed focal points of exile life in practically all Australian states. Somewhat surprisingly, the first *Sokol* unions arose in Darwin and Canberra and were soon followed by those in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and finally, in 1966, Brisbane. Though formally under the *Australský okrsek T. G. Masaryka* (the Australian District of T. G. Masaryk), individual *Sokol* branches maintained only limited contact with associations in other Australian territories and mostly operated in seclusion. While several *Sokol* organisations soon ceased to exist (Perth, Darwin, Canberra, Brisbane) or were integrated into other local Czechoslovak clubs (Adelaide), others like those in Sydney and Melbourne retained their dominant positions in the cultural, political and sporting life of Czechoslovak exile communities until 1989.[32]

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[31] See *Formanová/Gruntorád/Přibáň:* Exilová periodika 18-48 (cf. fn. 6); *Miller/Burešová/Trapl:* Český exil v Austrálii 164 (cf. fn. 9).

[32] Sokol Sydney Archive, Frenchs Forest, Sydney, První kronika sokolské jednoty and Kronika tělocvičné jednoty Sokol v Perthu, 1950-1951 [First Chronicle of the Sokol Unit and the Chronicle of the Gymnastics Branch of the Sokol of Perth, 1950-1951]. No inventory. For a general history of the Sokol in exile, see *Waldauf:* Sokol (cf. fn. 7).

Exiles or Immigrants?

Despite huge waves of emigration from Czechoslovakia triggered by the communist coup of 1948, the Russian occupation in 1968 and the period of "normalisation" in the 1970s/1980s, only a very small minority of refugees remained committed to the idea of anti-communist resistance. Most Czechs and Slovaks reduced their activities to reading exile periodicals and celebrating Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's birthday. In this context, the history of the most popular exile newspaper *Hlas domova* probably best documents the "consumer culture" of the Czechoslovak exiles. With a circulation of some 1,700 printed copies in the late 1950s (which doubled in the 1970s), the periodical had to rely on a small circle of authors. Despite desperate attempts by editor-in-chief František Váňa to increase the number of contributors, the content for the newspaper between 1950 and 1979 was written by some fifteen volunteers whose zeal kept *Hlas domova* alive for such a long time.[33] Exile periodicals worldwide consistently deplored the passivity of Czechs and Slovaks who, once having escaped the communist yoke, renounced all political activity against totalitarian regimes in the Soviet Bloc. This inactivity of the "silent majority" was also repeatedly criticised in Australia, and the exile newspaper *Pacific* summarised four reasons for this indifference towards political commitment in its April 1954 issue:

– The necessity of securing a living in a new country.
– Frustration caused by narrow-minded arguing and quarrels within Czechoslovak associations.
– Having found better living conditions in Australia, many exiles sought to forget the times of distress and persecution in Europe.
– There were radical opponents of any organised form of anti-communist activity who believed that only armed resistance against communism would be effective.[34]

Meanwhile, an article published in the early 1970s in *Zpravodaj demokratických Čechů a Slováků ve Victorii* (Newsletter of Democratic Czechs and Slovaks in Victoria) under the headline "What Kind of Men Are We in Australia?" illustrated that the same critical judgement may also have applied to post-1968 emigration from Czechoslovakia:

> […] even today, many of us would be offended if our status as political refugees were questioned. […] Most of us are ones who bravely stand aside from any activity. […] Where are the 98 per cent of Czechs and Slovaks who failed here in Melbourne to come and commemorate T. G. Masaryk, the great son of our nation? […] Where are those refusing to take part in our community life, to help us organise theatre and our national life in Australia and Victoria?[35]

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[33] *Volek,* Zdeněk: The Czechoslovak-Born Refugees in Melbourne, Australia. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Queensland 1986, 48.

[34] "Existenční starosti v nové zemi. Znechucení nad malichernými osobními hádkami a osočováním při práci v čs. organisacích. Mnozí exulanti nalezli v Austrálii lepší či spokojenější životní podmínky a snaží se pokud možno zapomenout na pohnuté doby bídy a pronásledování v Evropě. Zásadní odpůrci organisování, kteří za jedinou účinnou akci proti těm, kteří je vyštvali z domova, považují boj s puškou v ruce." National Library of Australia, Canberra, Pacific, 9 April 1954, 5.

[35] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Zpravodaj demokratických Čechů a Slováků ve Victorii, 30 April 1970, no. 3, 7-8.

The purported indolence of Czechs and Slovaks was often critically compared to the alleged enthusiasm of other exiled communities. In 1956, for example, the chairman of the Czechoslovak Association in Perth praised the political zeal of the Polish exiles while at the same time complaining that most Czech and Slovak refugees in Western Australia were becoming ordinary immigrants, forgetting their language and dismissing their moral duty to fight communism in their homeland.[36]

A sociological survey conducted in Adelaide seems to suggest, however, that the lack of interest in anti-communist resistance and overall passivity may have been the rule rather than the exception:

Table 2: Approximate Percentage of Persons Involved in Activities of Local National Organisations, Adelaide (late 1960s and early 1970s)[37]

National group	Approximate percentage of persons involved in activities of national organisations
Bulgarian	75 %
Belorussian	50-75 %
Croatian	25 %
Czech	25-50 %
Estonian	80 %
Hungarian	25 %
Latvian	75 %
Lithuanian	50-75 %
Polish	33 %
Russian	50 %
Serbian	25 %
Slovak	25-50 %
Slovenian	50-66 %
Ukrainian	75 %

Extrapolated to the entire Czechoslovak community throughout Australia, these statistics suggest that active membership in all of the Czechoslovak exile organisa-

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[36] CČES, Olomouc, Czechoslovak Exile in Western Australia Collection, Invitation to the meeting of the People of Goodwill Association, 8 June 1956. Not yet classified.

[37] *Martin,* Jean: Community and Identity: Refugee Groups in Adelaide. Canberra 1972, 137.

tions combined may have fluctuated between four and five thousand persons, while the participation of many remained a pure formality. Needless to say, over the course of time the ethos of the anti-communist resistance naturally faded out in favour of full assimilation. Moreover, as communism in Central and Eastern Europe exhibited unexpected endurance, the exiles gradually succumbed to feelings of lethargy and frustration. According to a survey conducted in Melbourne shortly before the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in 1989, more than one-fifth of all post-February refugees identified themselves exclusively with Australia, while fifty per cent considered their identity a mixture of Czech and Australian.[38]

By analysing the available data, the number of persons directly and systematically involved in the anti-communist resistance in a strict sense can be roughly estimated. Given the peripheral location of Australia, exile political work mostly involved activities such as organising demonstrations against communist regimes, publishing newspapers and writing articles, lobbying with various Australian political circles in favour of new immigrants from Czechoslovakia waiting in Austrian and German refugee camps, providing financial and political support to dissidents in Czechoslovakia, managing exile organisations and clubs and/or securing Czech and Slovak broadcasting. Considering all these possible activities, one might conclude that the genuine political exile was represented by a small group of six or seven hundred people among the relatively large community of some sixteen thousand Czechoslovak refugees settled in Australia after 1948, 1968 and in the 1970s. Active resistance against communism was thus likely engaged in by no more than four to five per cent of all immigrants.

A Generation Gap: Uneasy Relations between the Post-1948 and Post-1968 Waves of Immigration

Upon their arrival in Australia, post-1948 refugees found two small but well-established Czechoslovak clubs in Sydney (1927) and Melbourne (1939). Founded by emigrants from the lower classes who had left Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s mostly (but not exclusively) for economic reasons, both clubs openly expressed their affection for the communist regime in Czechoslovakia that promised to improve the social and economic status of the poor and underprivileged. Due to their incompatible political orientations, the members of the postwar wave of emigration shunned those of the previous one, resulting in the existence of parallel organisational structures. While the *Československý kroužek* (Czechoslovak Club) in Sydney survived the war and was formally dissolved in the 1970s, its representatives maintained only limited communication with organisations established by the post-1948 exiles.

Although ideological differences were not completely absent some twenty years later, it was largely the generation gap that dominated the relationship between the post-1948 and post-1968 waves of emigrants. Preserved documents from *Beseda* (Debate), the Czechoslovak association in Canberra, referred in 1970 to unspecified

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[38] *Volek:* Czechoslovak-Born Refugees 144, table 8.3 (cf. fn. 33).

conflicts emerging from "relations between two different generations representing the Czechoslovak community in Canberra."[39] This type of discord was not restricted to the Czechoslovak migrants, however: The Polish exile periodical *Przegląd katolicki* (Catholic Review) likewise admitted an uneasy coexistence of postwar exiles and refugees who had left Poland in 1981 following the imposition of martial law:

> […] the reunion of two refugee waves of the same nation but divided for 30 years […] for now we are distant, feeling suspicion in our souls as these people, perhaps unconsciously, might have accepted parts of a godless […] philosophy of life learned from the communist villains.[40]

A sociological survey conducted in 1986 by Michael Cigler for his PhD dissertation defended at Deakin University in Melbourne proves informative in this regard. According to Cigler's findings, more than one-third of the post-1968 emigrants believed that the older generation of refugees "thinks differently", with almost one-quarter of the respondents stating that the post-1948 exiles "are distant or they do not believe us." Similarly, many newcomers to Australia concluded that "Czechoslovakia has changed, and the political plans of post-February exiles are no longer feasible".[41] Cigler's inquiry also highlights substantial differences in terms of the social and occupational structure among members of the two waves of emigration. While relatively rare among post-1948 exiles (16 %), university degrees were common (40 %) among those fleeing Czechoslovakia after the suppression of the Prague Spring by the Soviet army.[42]

The general nature of the misunderstandings between the two waves of emigration was concisely described in the chronicle of the Czechoslovak Club in South Australia: "The post-1948 refugees saw in the newcomers only people affected by communism" while "the post-1968 emigrants criticised their predecessors as old-fashioned people with a 1948 mindset."[43] In a way, both statements represented two sides of the same coin. Active resistance to communism and the restoration of the interwar Masaryk republic were the *raison d'être* of all exile organisations founded by the post-1948 refugees, most of whom believed they would be able to return home immediately after the anticipated and presumptively quickly approaching collapse of a totalitarian regime. By contrast, many post-1968 newcomers to Australia

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[39] "[…] z poměru dvou rozdílných generací, které představují krajanskou veřejnost v Canberře." The Archive of Beseda, Czechoslovak Club in Canberra, Queanbeyan, Beseda, August 1970, 10. No inventory.

[40] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Hlasy Čechů a Slováků v Austrálii, 13 January 1981, 8.

[41] *Cigler,* Michael: The 1948 and 1968 Czech Refugee Settlers in Australia: A Comparison of the Settlement and Integration Processes among Two Waves of Settlers. Deakin University 1986 [Deakin University Archives, Manuscript of PhD Dissertation], 172.

[42] *Ibid.* 77, 165. Similar findings were also made regarding the Melbourne Czechoslovak community in the MA theses by *Volek:* Czechoslovak-Born Refugees 72, table 5.2 (cf. fn. 33).

[43] "Starousedlíci viděli v nově příchozích lidi poznamenané komunismem"; "Posrpnoví přistěhovalci starousedlíkům vytýkali, že jsou staromódní, ustrnulí na roce 1948." *Balcárková,* Dagmar: Kronika Československého klubu v Jižní Austrálii, 1949-1997 [Chronicle of the Czechoslovak Club of South Australia, 1949-1997]. Adelaide 1999, 84.

viewed the revival of the political system and culture of the First Czechoslovak Republic as a utopian dream entirely incompatible with the geopolitical reality of the 1960s and 1970s. The loss of faith in the near-term defeat of communism prevailing among post-1968 refugees was responsible for the increasing popularity of a gradualism theory assuming the rapprochement of democratic and communist political systems – and hence a limited liberalisation of the totalitarian regime in the foreseeable future.[44] This may have led to the weakening of anti-communist ethos among the post-1968 wave of emigration, and with new arrivals soon outnumbering the older members of Czechoslovak clubs and associations in some regions, the political agenda may subsequently have lost its primacy in favour of cultural activities. One postwar exile in Perth bitterly lamented that the new constitution of the Czechoslovak Association in Western Australia contained "not a word about communism and the struggle against it. One is also shamefully silent about democracy."[45] Similarly, Stanislav Hofírek, one of the most proficient post-1948 exiles, penned a letter in 1975 to the Council of Free Czechoslovakia in which he voiced his frustration over the situation in Australia: "It is really a sad and depressing chapter […] we have here persons trying to transform exile anti-communist organisations into community clubs providing entertainment."[46] Hofírek's rather mordant note may have been referring to the establishment of three Australian branches of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in Sydney (1972), Melbourne (1972) and Perth (1983) aimed at promoting Czechoslovak culture and science across the globe. Established by post-1968 immigrants, the Society of Arts and Sciences soon overshadowed traditional exile structures – especially in Sydney – and in the 1980s arguably became the most dynamic Czechoslovak organisation in Australia.[47]

Emotional and highly irrational factors should also be considered when assessing the relationships between the two waves of refugees, since individual cases of misconduct often resonated within the exile community and contributed to the atmosphere of mutual distrust. Complaints by the "old Czechoslovaks" usually referred to the ingratitude of newcomers for the lavish financial and social aid granted to them. By providing legal warranty and sponsoring families leaving communist Czechoslovakia, the exile organisations facilitated the migration of further compatriots to Australia – but this philanthropy was not always duly appreciated. After

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[44] More on gradualism theory as introduced by Pavel Tigrid in: *Kosatík,* Pavel: Tigrid, poprvé: průvodce osudem inteligentního muže ve dvacátém století [Tigrid for the First Time: A Guide to the Fate of an Intelligent Man of the 20th Century]. Praha 2013, 183-195. On critical reflections of gradualism theory among Czech exiles in Australia, see articles published by Stanislav Hofírek in Hlas domova, 12 June 1961, 7, and 18 May 1964, 7.

[45] "V zde navrhované konstituci není ani zmínka o komunismu, ne tak boji proti němu. O demokracii se také stydlivě mlčí." CČES, Olomouc, Fond Josefa Kučíka [Josef Kučík Collection], notes on the so-called Constitution of Czechoslovak Association in W. Australia. No inventory.

[46] CČES, Olomouc, Fond Rada svobodného Československa 1949-1983, Box 55, letter from Stanislav Hofírek to Jiří Horák, 19 May 1975.

[47] On the history of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, see *Rechcígl:* Pro vlast (cf. fn. 7).

arriving in Australia, for instance, many ignored the English language classes prepaid for them by local clubs and associations, creating a permanent source of frustration for the older generation of Czechs and Slovaks.[48]

Nevertheless, most of the dissension between the two generations of exile seemed to fade during the 1970s and 1980s as the new wave of refugees substantially contributed to the revival of Czechoslovak community life in Australia. In several cases, the arrival of post-1968 immigrants resulted in the revitalisation of individual exile organisations that had disappeared in the 1950s. This applied primarily to Czechoslovak associations in Canberra and Hobart, whereas clubs in other regions had seen a steady increase in membership numbers. Similarly, the most successful exile periodical *Hlas domova* would probably not have survived without the active involvement of newcomers from Czechoslovakia who substantially enhanced the number of subscribers or, in cases like that of Marcela Čechová, a former journalist at *Mladá Fronta* (Young Front), joined the editorial board as authors and columnists. When *Hlas domova* eventually announced the end of its publishing activity in 1979 after almost 30 years, it was mostly the post-1968 immigrants who supported the emergence of new exile periodicals, in particular *Hlasy Čechů a Slováků v Austrálii* (Voices of Czechs and Slovaks in Australia, 1980-1991) and *Panoráma* (1986-1988).

Czechs and Slovaks: The Sense of Togetherness versus Dreams of Independent Statehood

The Hoover Archives at Stanford University, California, retain the correspondence of exile Ferdinand Peroutka (1895-1978), an iconic figure of Czechoslovak political journalism. One of the private letters penned in the early 1970s by Reverend Andrew P. Slabey contains a brief summary of the "Slovak issue" in America. In his detailed and thought-provoking analysis, Slabey concluded that while Catholic Slovaks (the majority of the Slovak population in exile) largely favoured the idea of an independent Slovak state, the Protestants mostly remained loyal to the political project of Czechoslovakia.[49] The letter reflects the complexity of the question, as religious issues were intimately linked to Czech and Slovak nationalisms as well as to resistance against the totalitarian regime at home. Tabooed in communist Czechoslovakia, the future relationship between Czechs and Slovaks became a hotly debated topic in exile – with potentially destructive effects on the proclaimed unity.

When considering the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks in exile, Australia may serve as an "ideal type" of country for historians since religious, political and nationalist discord as well as common interests crystallised within it. Officially, the *Ústředí čs. demokratických organisací v Austrálii a na Novém Zélandě* as well as the regional exile organisations emphasized their "federal" status by making no difference between Czechs and Slovaks. This federal nature of exile was arguably best per-

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[48] See PNP, LA Litoměřice, František Váňa Collection, Box 4, letter from J. Čapková to František Váňa, 1 November 1968.

[49] The Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, Ferdinand Peroutka, Box 1, Pachman – Sokol, letter from Andrew P. Slabey to Ferdinand Peroutka, June 10, 1972.

sonified by Slovak politician Ján Viola, who served as vice-president of the *Ústředí* for several decades. In general, Slovaks may have represented some 10 to 15 per cent of the entire membership in exile organisations across Australia. The active involvement of Slovaks in Czechoslovak organisations was nevertheless consistently criticised by the separatist *Združenie australských Slovákov* (Association of Australian Slovaks, founded in 1950), which advocated ideas of Slovak nationalism and independent statehood. Among the targets of its disdain and public attacks were Slovaks who joined the newly established Czechoslovak National Club in Sydney in 1950, since their decision was viewed by the *Združenie* as disloyalty to the sacred and ultimate goal of all Slovaks "to free themselves from the yoke and imperial rule of the Czechs."[50] The political programme of the *Združenie* was overtly declared in the first issue of its periodical *Slovenský štít* (The Slovak Shield), which highlighted three fundamental goals to be achieved: 1) strengthening Slovak national identity, 2) achieving full political independence, and 3) fighting communism.[51]

In everyday life, however, the line between "federal" and "Slovak" associations often remained blurred if not invisible, as many Slovaks preferred double membership. This rather bizarre situation existed in Adelaide and was described in a 1979 report to the Council of Free Czechoslovakia:

> There are 64 Slovaks in the Czechoslovak Club in Adelaide with 786 members […] the club of Slovak separatists has 120 members. Everything is complicated by the fact that of these 65 [sic!] Slovaks in the Czechoslovak Club, at least 50 are also members of the Slovak organisation, thus having a double membership.[52]

In principle, both sides shared anti-communist and anti-Soviet sentiments, but at the same time they found themselves in conflict regarding the future of Czechoslovak statehood. These fundamental issues predetermined the nature of relationships oscillating between occasional – though reluctant – collaboration and open antagonism. While protests and demonstrations against the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia were often co-organised by Slovak and federal exile organisations, for instance, the *Združenie australských Slovákov* simultaneously disavowed the authority of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia, which was seen as an instrument of Czech imperialism or alternatively as an institution infiltrated by communist agents.[53]

The discord also affected a wide range of other activities. In the late 1970s, for example, the *Združenie* loudly protested the use of the Slovak language in the Czechoslovak broadcasts in Adelaide, demanding a separate radio programme for the Slovak minority.[54] Similar demands were also voiced in Sydney and other Australian cities.[55]

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[50] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Slovenský štít, 1, 8 June 1950, 10.
[51] *Ibid.* 4.
[52] CČES, Olomouc, Fond Rada svobodného Československa 1949-1983, Box L 88, letter from František Nový to Martin Kvetko, 22 January 1979.
[53] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Slovenský štít, IV/2 (April-May), 1954, 4-5.
[54] *Balcárková:* Kronika Československého klubu 115 (cf. fn. 43).
[55] *Reichová*, Jana/*Špaček,* Vladimír/*Vlažná,* Vlasta: Rádiové vzpomínání: Český rozhlas

Relations between "Czechoslovak" and "Slovak" exiles were further complicated by bitter disputes over the interpretation of the role played by the *Slovenský štát* (Slovak State) during the Second World War. While Czechs stressed the fascist character of Slovak statehood and accused the Slovak political representation, above all Jozef Tiso (1887-1947) and Andrej Hlinka (1864-1938), of high treason leading to the tragic demise of democratic Czechoslovakia, the *Združenie* emphasized the liberation of Slovaks from the Czech yoke and the very existence of an independent state. Owing to the close alliance between the *Slovenský štát* and Nazi Germany, the postwar wave of emigration included a large number of war criminals and supporters of Adolf Hitler's ideas. It was therefore not surprising that many Slovak exiles considered the alliance with Germany to have been their fundamental protection against both Soviet communism and Czech imperialism. This opinion was overtly expressed in a letter published in *Hlas domova* in August 1955:

> […] German and Slovak soldiers were fighting alongside each other as brothers against the Soviets, and when it comes to war again, the Slovak soldier will fight together with the German one against Bolsheviks as well as against Prague. The war will be waged against any state called the Czechoslovak Republic.[56]

Like in the United States, the persistent calls for independent Slovak statehood in Australia were actively backed by representatives of the Catholic Church, which abhorred the idea of coexistence with the largely atheist and more liberal Czechs under the umbrella of a common state structure. In addition, the Slovak clergy largely commemorated Jozef Tiso, the Catholic priest and prime minister of the Slovak State, as a national martyr who had sacrificed his life for his homeland when he had been unjustly sentenced to death by the Czechs. The key role of Catholic clergymen in the *Združenie australských Slovákov* did not escape the attention of political leaders of the Czechoslovak exile community, who blamed the Vatican for undermining the idea of Czechoslovak statehood by deliberately choosing the Slovak nationalists as eligible adepts for Catholic missionary activity in Australia.[57]

While political disunity and fragmentation were features of the Czechoslovak exile community, the same applied to the Slovak nationalist movement, in which the existence of two rivalling exile organisations aspiring to global political leadership –

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v Sydney, vznik a činnost do roku 1992 [Radio Memories: The Czech Broadcasting Programmes in Sydney, Establishment and Activities until 1992]. Frenchs Forest 1999, 22-23.

56 "[…] Nemecky vojak a Slovenský voják bojovaly bratsky po boku proti Sovietom aj teraz keď pride zas len kvojne zas len ten Slovenský vojak bude po boku německého bojovat proti Bolševikom aj proti Prahe. A proti akemu kolvek celku ktorý by sa mal volat ČSR." PNP, LA Litoměřice, František Váňa Collection, Box 2, letter from an anonymous Slovak exile to František Váňa, editor-in-chief of Hlas domova, 17 August 1955.

57 CČES, Olomouc, Fond Rada svobodného Československa 1949-1983, Box L 88, letter from František Nový to Martin Kvetko, 22 January 1979. See also *Chovan-Rehák,* Juraj/*Grácová,* Genovéva/*Marunia,* Peter (eds.): Slovenský povojnový exil: Zborník materiálov zo seminára Dějiny slovenského exilu po roku 1945 v Matici slovenskej v Martine 27.-28. júna 1996 [Slovak Exile in the Post-War Period: A Compilation of the Seminar "The History of Slovak Exile after 1945" at Matice Slovenská in Martin, 27-28 June 1996. Martin 1998, 468-474.

the *Slovenská národná rada v zahraničí* (Slovak National Council Abroad) founded by Karol Sidor (1901-1953) and the more radical *Slovenský oslobodzovací výbor* (Slovak Liberation Committee) led by Ferdinand Ďurčanský (1906-1974) – engendered political schism within local Slovak associations worldwide. Although the structure of the governing body of the *Združenie* adhered to the principle of parity between supporters of Sidor and Ďurčanský, the persistent division paralysed the Slovak exile movement's political activities until its eventual unification in the *Slovenská oslobodzovacia rada* (Slovak Liberation Council) in 1960.[58]

Conclusion

Located too far from the main centres of anti-communist resistance, the Czechoslovak exile in Australia faced challenges that did not exist in other countries. In particular, these challenges included the strict assimilation policy of the Australian government, obligatory two-year work contracts for 1948 refugees, the fragmentation of the Czechoslovak exile community and the almost complete absence of any older Czech and Slovak settlement. Moreover, the sparsely populated country with many unexplored regions engendered the mentality of a frontier society, and many political refugees therefore positioned themselves as makers of civilisation in a half-civilised and underdeveloped Australia.

Despite these difficulties, the Czechoslovak exile in Australia contributed to anti-communist resistance in various ways. The best exile periodical was arguably published not in the USA or Western Europe but in Melbourne under the direction of František Váňa. Highly esteemed by influential figures of the Czechoslovak exile, such as Ferdinand Peroutka, Josef Škvorecký, Jiří Voskovec or Pavel Tigrid, *Hlas domova* had subscribers in many countries, and its impact upon the exile community across the globe still remains underestimated by historians. At the same time, Czechoslovak artists like conductor Rudolf Pekárek, entrepreneurs like Milan Vyhnálek or Josef Chromý, sportsmen like skier Antonín Šponar and scientists like George Chaloupka or František Popovský attained excellent reputations and great influence within Australian society.

On the other hand, the Czechoslovak community in Australia exhibited the same life strategies and collective behaviour as refugees elsewhere. Most Czechoslovaks abstained from anti-communist resistance and were only passive consumers of activities organised by a small group of politically committed compatriots. By integrating or assimilating into Australian society, they defined themselves as Czech Australians rather than political refugees, and as a result the genuine Czechoslovak exile in Australia may have comprised no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the entire expatriate community.

For historians, the Czechoslovak exile in Australia may in a way also serve as an ideal example of historical continuity that was shamefully lost in the homeland. Firstly, immigrants from Czechoslovakia kept alive the culture, democratic traditions and ideals of the Masaryk republic. Secondly, all the problems of prewar

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[58] Libri Prohibiti Knihovna, Praha, Slovenský štít, 1, 8 June 1950, 4.

Czechoslovakia were inherently embedded in the very nature of the exile community itself, including the narrow-mindedness of party politics or the ever-increasing tensions between Czechs and Slovaks over the future of Czechoslovak statehood. Thus when it comes to the abstract question of the continuity of Czech history, one might conclude that the national narrative was embodied by the exiles – albeit extraterritorially – rather than by the totalitarian regime at home that produced the historical discontinuity and deviation spanning more than four decades.