

Hingarová, Vendula V.: *Česká a slovenská periodika v Argentíně* [Czech and Slovak Periodicals in Argentina].

Univerzita Karlova, Praha 2021, 246 pp., ISBN 978-80-7571-078-9.

The monograph *Česká a slovenská periodika v Argentíně* (Czech and Slovak Periodicals in Argentina) makes a significant contribution to long-term research on Czech and Slovak emigration and political exile. Although Latin America may not have been the main destination of Czechoslovak migrants, there is a rich literature mapping and analyzing the lives of Czech and Slovak communities. Vendula V. Hingarová's research is thus drawing on pioneering studies by Vlastimil Kybal, Josef Opatrný, Ivo Barteček, Vladimír Nálevka, Markéta Křížová and/or Lukáš Perutka. By exploring the history of the Czech and Slovak periodical press in Argentina, the author has produced a complex and meticulous analysis of newspapers and periodicals published by expatriate and exile communities scattered throughout the country. In a way, the study helps to save the cultural heritage and collective memory that might otherwise have been irreversibly lost.

It is true that the catalog of Czechoslovak exile periodicals compiled in 1999 by Lucie Formanová, Jiří Gruntorád and Michal Přibáň covers all Latin American countries with Czech and Slovak presses, including Argentina.¹ However, the compendium includes only newspapers published after 1945, leaving aside most of the periodicals published by Czechs and Slovaks in the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, the catalog's list of exile periodicals is far from complete, as Vendula V. Hingarová's monograph covers a wider range of titles. This is especially true for Slovak periodicals in Argentina, since the book under review also includes titles that are missing from the catalog, such as *Oznamovatel*, *Slovenský život v Argentíně* or *Zápisník*. In other cases, Vendula V. Hingarová identified previously unknown issues of periodicals and also new libraries or archives that have them in their collections. For example, according to the catalog, only the Náprstkovo Museum in Prague holds the periodical *Velehrad – Alcazar*, but Hingarová found other issues in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and in the Collegium Carolinum in Munich. At the same time, several issues of *Velehrad – Alcazar* (1945/8 and 9) have been digitized and are available to the public at www.scriptorum.cz.

The analysis of Czechoslovak periodicals and newspapers in Argentina confirms the thesis that the expatriate and exile communities produced an incredibly rich print culture, although most periodicals proved to be rather short-lived. Despite the disastrous working and (usually) financial conditions, competition in the publishing industry was paradoxically high. Worldwide, the Czechoslovak exile and expatriate communities produced an impressive number of titles, certainly more than eight hundred. In the United States alone, more than 160 titles were published between 1945 and 1989. Germany had a similar number, while Canada had about 60 exile

¹ Formanová, Lucie / Gruntorád, Jiří / Přibáň, Michal: Exilová periodika. Katalog periodik českého a slovenského exilu a krajanských tisků vydávaných po roce 1945 [Exile periodicals. Catalogue of Czech and Slovak exile and expatriate periodicals published after 1945]. Praha 1999, 15-18.

publications. The situation was similar in Australia, where nearly 70 newspapers appeared. In more peripheral Argentina, Hingarová counted 45 periodicals since 1907. However, most of them disappeared within a few years or even months, while only a couple of them such as *Nová Doba – Nueva Era*, *Velehrad – Alcazar*, *Slovenský život v Argentině*, *Dělnické listy* or *Slovenský Lud* survived long enough to leave a long-term testimony of the life of the Czech and Slovak communities in Argentina.

As Vendula V. Hingarová has convincingly demonstrated, Czech and Slovak print culture in Argentina had several distinctive features. First, given the importance of Argentina as one of the global centers of the Slovak national movement in exile, Slovak periodicals mushroomed, especially in the late 1940s and 1950s. This was true of the separatist *Juhoamerický Slovák* or *Slovenská Republika*, among others. Second, most of the periodicals aimed to keep Czechoslovak national identity and culture alive. For this reason, expatriate periodicals prevailed, while the exile press proved to be rather marginal and short-lived. Third, due to the close control of the press under the Perón presidency (1946-1955) and the gradual assimilation of the expatriate and exile communities, Czech and Slovak were increasingly replaced by Spanish.

The author has provided a meticulous overview of Czech and Slovak periodicals in Argentina, while at the same time omitting a profound contextual analysis. By studying the press in a particular country, for example, historians and sociologists can contribute to the analysis of the cultural and social networks of expatriate and exile communities around the world. From a methodological point of view, it may be helpful and rewarding to study emigration and exile movements not as hierarchical structures and through the prism of institutional history, but rather as horizontal networks of informal contacts, personal relationships, social ties, cultural activities, financial flows, and political communications that connect their nodes. The story goes that the greatest value of these journals was the fact that they brought together the scattered communities and created a rich and functional network of short-term or long-term ties that cemented community life and facilitated the spiritual, cultural, and ideological development of a society without a home – a shadow nation temporarily living in diaspora. Here, the author could have used *Social Network Analysis* (SNA), which would have allowed her to study emigration and exile as dense networks of contacts, relationships, collaborations, and information exchanges. SNA basically explores social structures from a relational perspective. It models social networks in terms of nodes, representing individuals, and ties, relationships and interactions among them. Tracing its origins back to sociological veterans Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel, and then largely popularized by Manuel Castells, SNA underwent a massive expansion on the threshold of the 21st century. The first studies applying SNA to historical research appeared around the turn of the 1990s and the exchange between history and SNA has recently led to the formation of an entirely new, emerging field: *Historical Network Research* (HNR). Since 2000, the HNR has been used in a number of studies, mostly investigating religious and political networks as well as the exchange of ideas in early modern and modern Europe. These studies have clearly demonstrated the enormous potential of the

HNR for the analysis of communication networks within the Czechoslovak expatriate and exile communities. In addition to correspondence, the periodical press is an ideal source for the study of historical networks.

Content analysis of expatriate and exile periodicals would be particularly useful in identifying the network of authors as well as the geographical scope of readership and subscribers. It could also shed light on the relationship between periodicals in Argentina and the headquarters of the expatriate and exile press in other countries, especially the United States, Canada and Western Europe. Given that such a study would require the analysis of a large number of typified sources, data modeling and data processing should be included. Hingarová's monograph can thus serve as a starting point for a broader, groundbreaking study of global networks.