

to technological development, classifying them into stages between savages and civilized peoples.²⁵ It used visualizations of the different types in sculpture and casts and was accompanied by “The Races of Man” chart in which Hrdlička included a chart of categorized racial types. And before that, at the St. Louis World’s Fair, he infamously retrieved brains of native Filipino persons who died there of pneumonia for his further research at the Smithsonian, causing considerable controversy in recent years.²⁶

What are the Czechoslovaks

As an anthropologist and Czech native, Hrdlička maintained close relationships with colleagues in Czechoslovakia, helped to shape the development of the discipline of anthropology there and financed the establishment of the Czech journal *Anthropologie*, published between 1923 and 1941.²⁷ Hrdlička is often recognized as a promoter of the theory that all humans had a common origin and he applied it to explaining the existence and composition of the Czechoslovak people.

He also retained close contacts with the Czech and Slovak émigré communities in the USA and appeared in connection with the Czechoslovak pavilion at the Chicago world’s fair in 1933. The pamphlet *World’s Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group*, put together by the local diaspora, which I have discussed in the previous chapter, included not only a description of the national pavilion but also a brief explanation of various aspects of the history and culture of the new country and its people.²⁸ Both the brochure and Hrdlička’s contribution to it im-

25 Matthew Bokovoy, “San Diego 1915–16,” in *Encyclopedia of World’s Fairs*, 225. Bokovoy, *The San Diego World’s Fairs and the Southwestern Memory, 1880–1940* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 90–93; Aleš Hrdlička, *Descriptive Catalog of the Section of Physical Anthropology, Panama-California Exhibition* (National Views, 1915).

26 Michael L. Krenn, ed., *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy from 1900 Through World War II* (New York – London: Garland Pub., 1998), 273, note 22. Also A. L. Lawshe to Edwards, 28 March 1905, RBIA RG 350, General Classified Files, no. 10699-3. Nicole Dungca, Claire Healey and Andrew Ba Tran, “The Smithsonian’s ‘Bone Doctor’ Scavenged Thousands of Body Parts,” *The Washington Post* 15 August 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/interactive/2023/ales-hrdlicka-smithsonian-brains-racism>. The story of one of the subjects from the St. Louis fair was turned into a graphic novel *Searching for Maura* by Claire Healy, Nicole Dungca and Ren Galeno at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/interactive/2023/maura-philippines-smithsonian-brain-collection>.

27 The full title was *Anthropologie, časopis věnovaný fyzické antropologii, nauce o plemenech, demografii, eugenice a tělesné výchově se zvláštním zájmem k Slovanům* (Anthropology, a journal on physical anthropology, learnings about races, demography, eugenics and physical education with special interest in the Slavs).

28 *World’s Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group (Czechs and Slovaks)* (Chicago: Czechoslovak Group, 1933).

ply that world's fairs and the related publications were indeed formative for verbalizing and visualizing the basic features of new nations like Czechoslovakia.

Hrdlička supplied an article on the physical and mental characteristics of "Czechoslovaks," which outlined the historic circumstances of the ethnic formations of the group and offers an insight into how the invented ethnicity was framed for external audiences.²⁹ The anthropologist overviewed here the geography of the newly formed state, its history and the different ethnic groups as well as the various traits of the inhabitants. Discussing the effects of the various historical struggles on the current racial composition, the invasions of the territory from Germans and Magyars led, in his view, to so-called *admixtures*.

According to Hrdlička, this mixing between racial groups contributed to the different cultural development of the individual parts of the nation and brought certain cultural advantages: "the Czechs particularly suffered, were much admixed, but through force of circumstances also rose culturally."³⁰ The Slovaks, on the other hand, were repressed and isolated from the west by Magyars, Hrdlička held.³¹ The Slovak seclusion had restricted their cultural advance but in direct proportion to this, the Slovaks (and to an extent Moravians) had better preserved their folk art and their individuality, while the Czechs became more cosmopolitan.³² The positive outcome of the Slovak isolation was for Hrdlička that the Slovaks and most Moravians "remained purer than the Czechs."³³ The assumed purity of the Slovak culture and arts could therefore be contrasted with the more sophisticated cultural progress of the Czechs.

Hrdlička's observations, backed by his position at the Smithsonian, therefore played an important role in communicating who the Czechoslovaks were to the world and the world's fair. As an anthropologist, he tried to demonstrate that diversity within the people can be traced in different body types and behavioral traits in a way reminiscent of Johann Gottfried Herder's characteristics of the Slavs and their typical features.³⁴ The notions of what constituted typical characteristics of Slavs, Germans and other groups were so influential for national

29 Aleš Hrdlička, "What are the Czechoslovaks," in *World's Fair Memorial*, 22–24. Hrdlička used "Czechoslovaks," the "Czechoslovak people" and the "Czechoslovak tribes" as an umbrella term common at the time.

30 Hrdlička, "What are the Czechoslovaks," 23.

31 Hrdlička, "What are the Czechoslovaks," 23.

32 Hrdlička, "What are the Czechoslovaks," 23.

33 Hrdlička, "What are the Czechoslovaks," 23.

34 Johann G. von Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 4 vol. (Riga and Leipzig: J. F. Hartknoch, 1784–1791).

revivalists across Central Europe.³⁵ In Hrdlička's view, the most preserved (read: ancient) types could be found in Moravia and Slovakia and had:

good stature, strong, well-proportioned body, face more rounded than oval, physiognomy frank, smiling, intelligent and attractive, hair and eyes ranging from light to medium brown, absence of prognathism. Their principal mental characteristics are cordiality, sensitiveness, idealism, valour, with love of family, music, dance, and of everything good and beautiful. Also, considerable individualism, ingrained love of the soil and all that goes with it, of order and cleanliness.³⁶

Such commentary from a scholar who engaged in establishing classifications of people based on anthropometric data should be read as his attempt at combining the quantifiable and measurable physiognomy with unmeasurable cultural and mental characteristics of specific ethnic groups. Hrdlička put together the latter approach, more typical of Romantic Nationalism of the previous century, with more rigorous methods in order to explain the hierarchies between the various ethnicities in Czechoslovakia as well as the historicity of the people in rural areas. These features were then indirectly used in presentations of Czechoslovakia. As I have shown earlier, the image of the state was partly embedded in folk culture and it was the sensitiveness, cordiality, and love of dance and music of the Moravians and Slovaks that materialized in the use of folk costumes and customs at world's fairs. The answers to Hrdlička's question what the Czechoslovaks were therefore helped to justify the divide in the presentation of the people from the eastern and western parts of the country.

Eugenics at exhibitions and congresses

Creating hierarchies of peoples within one (albeit invented) ethnic group was a fairly common practice, which in many cases was applied to determining racial differences. Hrdlička and his fellow anthropologists, too, worked on race and racial divisions. Hrdlička, for instance, was a member of the Committee on the Negro, established in 1926 by the American Association of Physical Anthropol-

35 For example Jan Kollár, "Dobré vlastnosti národu slovanského," in *Obrození národa, Svědectví a dokumenty*, edited by Jan Novotný, 191–205 (Prague: Melantrich, 1979); Karel Havlíček Borovský, "Slovan a Čech," *Pražské noviny*, February 15 – March 12, 1846.

36 Hrdlička, "What are the Czechoslovaks," 24.