

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.

ogy and the National Research Council in the USA. The committee conducted anthropometric research on black adults and babies, comparing them to young apes.³⁷ On top of the unethical side of such approach, data received from such simplified measurements were often misconstrued and misused to advance racist claims about supremacy of white people.³⁸

One of the other researchers in the research group, Earnest A. Hooton, later published his findings in “What is an American?,” in which he searched for common physical and other traits of Americans.³⁹ The study was not dissimilar to Hrdlička’s enquiry about the Czechoslovaks and provides an insight into how race was subjected to the allegedly scientific classification that was so often visualized in world’s fairs and various publications. The two authors shared not only a similar title but also line of thinking.

Hooton’s American was descended from a European white settler, whose characteristics can be deduced on the basis of data and measurements. Hooton distinguished four different types, the eldest being called “old American” already by Hrdlička in 1925.⁴⁰ Hooton acknowledged the existence of Afro-Americans as well as “Real Americans,” whom he identified as “Indians.” They, however, “of course [did] not count” in his consideration of Americanism, without giving the reason why.⁴¹ Yet Hooton also concluded that there were no anthropological grounds to create a selection between the different racial, ethnic or national groups. The purpose of the research was to “segregate and to eliminate the unfit, worthless, degenerate and antisocial portion of each racial and ethnic strain.”⁴² He, nevertheless, added that “candidates for such biological extinction would not be selected on the basis of Aryan or Semitic descent, blond hair or black skin, but solely on the score of their individual physical, mental and

37 A. E. Samaan, *From a “Race of Masters” to a “Master Race”: 1948 to 1848* (published through www.crehtespace.com, 2013), 256; Aleš Hrdlička, “The Full-Blood American Negro,” *The American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 12, no. 1 (1928): 15–33.

38 For a critical revision of scientific racism and anthropology, see for example Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture. Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Daniel J. Kevles, *The Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986); Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Random House, 2015); Steve Garner, *Racisms: An Introduction* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2010).

39 Earnest A. Hooton, “What is an American,” *The American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (1936): 1–26. In fact, Hrdlička also offered his views on the American characteristics in his articles and lectures, see for example Katherine Scarborough, “Heart of America is Sound, Says Scientist,” *The Sun*, 21 November 1926, 1.

40 Hrdlička, *The Old Americans*, Baltimore, 1925.

41 Hooton, “What is an American,” 4.

42 Hooton, “What is an American,” 26.

moral bankruptcy.”⁴³ While Hooton, Hrdlička and many of their fellow anthropologists in the USA avoided applying theories that would openly endorse racial hygiene, they created other problematic criteria between groups of people based on their physical and mental capacities.

Some of the research for the study on Americans was conducted at the Century of Progress Exhibition in 1933–34, where anthropometric data was taken from about 6,000 visitors.⁴⁴ Many American world’s fairs as much as the colonial expositions in Europe were considered a paradise for anthropologists because they brought together various peoples from distant parts of the world to one place who could be studied and categorized. And it also was at the Century of Progress in Chicago that eugenics, considered at the time the science of human improvement by better breeding, was applied for “classification for the basic sciences” for the first time at a world’s fair.⁴⁵

The relationship between eugenics and exhibiting had been established at the beginning of the 20th century when smaller eugenics exhibits cropped up at various places across the USA and Europe. They were frequently attended by Hrdlička and eventually his Czech colleagues. The First International Congress of Eugenics which was held in London in 1912, included a small eugenics display which mostly consisted of charts.⁴⁶ Subsequent congresses, like the Second International Congress of Eugenics in 1921 that took place in New York, included increasingly larger exhibitions with various casts, specimens and photographs. In 1921, A. H. Schultz of the Carnegie Institution displayed plaster casts of Caucasians and negro fetuses which were to illustrate the difference between the two races.⁴⁷ Hrdlička played an important role in the content of these exhibits and arranged here seven cases with his findings, aimed at proving that race was a biological category. The exhibits consisted of, for example, American Indian skulls that alleged the persistence of Neanderthaloid forms and “other primitive features” or “Old” (white) Americans that included so-called “degenerates ... producing unsocial offspring.”⁴⁸ This exhibit was used repeatedly and would eventually appear—in part—at the Century of Progress too.

43 Hooton, “What is an American,” 26.

44 Hooton, “What is an American,” 6.

45 Charles Davenport, *Eugenics: The Science of Human Improvement by Better Breeding* (New York: Henry Holt, 1910), Harry L. Laughlin, “The Eugenics exhibit at Chicago,” *The Journal of Heredity* 26, no. 4 (1935), 155.

46 *Catalogue of the exhibition, July 24th to July 30th, 1912 / First International Eugenics Congress*, London, University of London, South Kensington International Eugenics Congress 1912 (London: Charles Knight and co, 1912).

47 Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 47.

48 Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 47.

Hrdlička also participated in the Third International Congress of Eugenics that took place at the American Museum of Natural History in New York in 1932. This was also the first international meeting attended by Czech eugenicists in the role of contributors and exhibitors who had not taken part previously for financial reasons. The Czech biologist Vladislav Růžička (1870–1934), for instance, was appointed one of the vice-presidents of the Congress while the ethnographer František Pospíšil of the Moravian Museum in Brno and Vojtěch Suk, an anthropologist from Masaryk University in the same city, contributed to the exhibit at the Congress. The former, for instance, supplied “Photographs showing Asiatic traits in American Indians,” based on his field research, while the latter added charts and models of teeth decay and blood groups in “white and negro races” as well as a section on vacations and health.⁴⁹ Comparison of what was seen as different stages of development of human races was used to establish order and classification between them. Czech scholars therefore engaged in the eugenic methods, which included visualizing difference and emphasizing desired characteristics racial hierarchies between groups of people.

Eugenics in Czechoslovakia

The active involvement of Czechs⁵⁰ in the Eugenics congresses and the views of anthropologists like Hrdlička and Matiegka on race and ethnicity indicate that eugenics in the interwar period was practiced in various forms worldwide as well as in Czechoslovakia. Its wide acceptance and presence thus resonate with the narratives about the Czechoslovak people presented in national pavilions which included the envisaged forward direction of the nation. Czech scientists and eugenicists had been in close contact with their colleagues in the United Kingdom, France and the USA, and some studied theories of racial hygiene promoted in Germany.⁵¹ The scope of beliefs was also wide but many scholars and scientists at the beginning of the 20th century were quick to disassociate their

49 Henry Farnham Perkins and Harry Hamilton Laughlin, *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics; Scientific Papers of The Third International Congress of Eugenics, Held at American Museum of Natural History, New York, August 21–23, 1932* (Baltimore, The Williams & Wilkins co, 1934), 490, 499.

50 I refer to Czech eugenicists here rather than Czech and Slovak, because for most of the interwar period, Czechs were more dominant in this field. Eugenics in Slovakia is often discussed more in connection with the Slovak State during the Second World War. Anton Hruboň, “Creating the Paradigm of ‘New Nation.’ Eugenic Thinking and the Culture of Racial-Hygiene in the Slovak State,” *Fascism* 10, no. 2 (2021): 275–297, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-bja10032>.

51 Turda, “Introduction,” *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900–1945* (London – New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), xi–xii.