

2nd

CZECH-AMERICAN WORKSHOP ON CZECH HISTORY

APRIL 18, 2024, 14:00 CET



Room SM4, Philosophical Faculty, University
of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

Zoom link: <https://cesnet.zoom.us/j/95869939106>

PROGRAMME

- 14:00–14:05** Introduction by the organisers
- 14:05–14:25** **Chair: Martin Dekarlı**
Andrew Deaton (University of Alabama) – "The Legacy of the Hussite Wars in the Bohemian Estates Uprising of 1547"
- 14:25–14:40** Discussion
- 14:40–15:00** **Chair: Jiří Hutečka**
Kate Densford (University of Nevada) – "'Hit Hard by Fate': The Women Who Aided Deserters during the First World War"
- 15:00–15:15** Discussion
- 15:15–15:30** Coffee break
- 15:30–15:50** **Chair: Jiří Hutečka**
Bruce R. Berglund (University of Kansas) – "Painting the Czechoslovak Brand on the Ice: Sport and State Reputation in the First Republic"
- 15:50–16:05** Discussion
- 16:05 – 16:25** Concluding discussion



ABSTRACTS OF LECTURES

Andrew Deaton (University of Alabama) – "The Legacy of the Hussite Wars in the Bohemian Estates Uprising of 1547"

Religious militarism famously permeated the Hussite Wars of 1419–1434. This facet of those conflicts was of course integral to their outbreak, but that religiously-infused militarism also functioned as the guiding principle of the Hussite commander Jan Žižka's own military policy, as seen in his Vojenský řád, or Military Rule, issued in the spring of 1423. Throughout this text, the Hussite hejtman unceasingly appeals to religious justification, specifically from the Old Testament, for the discipline which he demands of his warriors. Sin having brought those warriors to the precipice of ruin on the battlefield, only the righteous constancy befitting a warrior of God would bring victory, according to Žižka.

Kate Densford (University of Nevada) – "Hit Hard by Fate!: The Women Who Aided Deserters during the First World War"

While most Habsburg soldiers in the First World War served until the armistice, a number of them deserted from the start of the war. Soldiers sometimes deserted owing to poor treatment by officers. Many deserted due to deprivation: They had little to eat and hygiene was bad, especially in the war's final months. The number of deserters increased during the war—especially in 1917 and 1918—and they arrived on the home front. In many cases, POWs went to hometowns where they trusted people. This paper addresses POWs who spent time in small towns and villages, and more specifically, it examines women who aided these deserters on the provincial home front.

These women—who, for example, concealed whereabouts from prying gendarmes or provided food—often explained their actions by parroting the state's gendered rhetoric used throughout the war in a manner that decidedly contradicted the military's war aims. As mothers, wives, and sisters, they claimed that they could not deny aiding their family members; they were fulfilling their roles as women. Women who were not related to the men they helped desert also explained their actions as upholding their duties as women. Late in the war, at least some women no longer felt obligated to support the state—if they did so in the first place. Local and regional officials, however, saw these women as undermining the war effort as they sheltered men who should have been at the fighting front.

This paper, based on a chapter from my larger book project on the provincial Habsburg home front, will draw on several court cases from southern Moravia involving Czech- and German-speaking women who aided deserters. These cases provide a window on home front life late in the war, showing the everyday challenges women faced. While many women received amnesty, these cases also show that gendarmes and other officials involved invested considerable time in these cases as they struggled to maintain control of the home front.

ABSTRACTS OF LECTURES

Bruce R. Berglund (University of Kansas) – "Painting the Czechoslovak Brand on the Ice: Sport and State Reputation in the First Republic"

In May 2024, Prague will host the IIHF World Hockey Championship for the eleventh time—more than any other host city. Prague's place as a hub of international hockey began in the 1930s, when the city hosted the world championships for the first time and welcomed traveling clubs from Europe and North America. During the interwar decades, international sport had significance far beyond what happened in the match. Hosting athletes, journalists, and sports officials from around the world was one part of the larger effort to build Czechoslovakia's international reputation. This paper shows how planners in Prague worked to promote the Czechoslovak Republic as an advanced, modern state through organizing and promoting international sports.

