

THE PORTA FESTIVAL, 1967-1969
TRAMPING AND THE FORGING OF A CZECHOSLOVAK WILDERNESS:

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A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

Chapel Hill
2014

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ABSTRACT

Rosavera Kneller: The Porta Festival, 1967-1969: Tramping and the Forging of a Czechoslovak Wilderness
(Under the Direction of Andrea F. Bohlman)

This thesis aims to depict and explain the multi-faceted nature of “tramping,” a multi-faceted cultural phenomenon that has been a persistent influence on the Czech and Slovak cultural landscape and a lasting part of the Czech national imaginary since the interwar period. In order to do so I focus on a particular moment in its history, namely the Porta festivals of 1967-1969, which encapsulate what I take to be the central features of a movement that is not reducible to cold war categories, simple historicizing or a consistent collective narrative. I argue that the historical self-consciousness of the Porta festivals builds on its earlier models rather than simply reemerging, and that it does so through the reenactments and re-embodiments of landscape and community that are new each time, often in tension, but always moving through an imagined wilderness, intentionally lost in time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Andrea Bohlman, whose encouragement, creativity and enthusiasm made it possible to envision and realize a project that has in many ways exceeded my own expectations. I would also like to thank Bob Jenkins for his calm and consistent support. I would like to thank both for their invariably good humor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE STAGE.....	1
<i>Porta</i> Background.....	4
Tramping Histories.....	7
Outline of Paper.....	10
CHAPTER TWO: PORTA AS TEXT: TRAMPING AND ITS TIME.....	13
Porta as a "Country and Western" Event.....	13
Links to the Past.....	17
1969 Porta.....	21
CHAPTER THREE: PORTA'S TEXTS: ENVISIONING A WILDERNESS.....	24
Porta's Songs and the Tramp's Wilderness.....	25
Tramping's Landscape and the National Revival.....	29
Landscape and Nation.....	31
CHAPTER FOUR: PORTA AS PERFORMANCE: ENACTING A WILDERNESS.....	34
Tramping's Anthem.....	34
Tramping's Rituals and Objects.....	37
Journeys Through Darkness and a Sense of Play.....	41
CONCLUSION.....	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	47

Setting the Stage

As a young musician, Fedor Skotal travelled all night from Prague to to the northwestern Bohemian town of Ústí Nad Labem in June of 1968. There, under two steep rock formations falling into the Lave river, he described a tent

full of cowboys, going mad with every performance, showing their enthusiasm by firing blanks in the air with real-life replicas of Colt 45s. The entire place drank deeply from barrels of slivovitz and did not attempt to hide the red flames of their cigarettes

This scene was accompanied by triangle shaped flags with embroidered pictures of Native American headdresses, longhorn cows and buffalo, cliffs and waterfalls. The performers were playing Czech versions of "Orange Country Special", Slovak rendition's of Hank Williams' "Lonesome Heart", the Brothers Four's "Greenfields", and "Plachnice John B" two years before the Beach Boys played their legendary concert in Prague.¹ They were also playing unfamiliar songs, songs in Czech about the Kačák river humming like the Mississippi, about sleeping under the stars in Brdy, about journeying lost through the night outside of Liberec. Some of these songs were sung by musicians a little older: all male quartets in sailors hats and stripes, or matching flannel shirts and bolo ties, singing in foxtrots and tangos in close four-part harmonies. And some of them were younger, in ripped up military clothing purchased cheaply from surplus stores and heavy duty wandering boots. These were accompanied by banjos, harmonicas and the occasional fiddle. All of them had travelled at least a night to take part in the third, and largest, festival of country and tramp music in Czechoslovakia. They didn't travel from Prague, or Brno or Bratislava, but from the settlements just outside these cities; settlements called Island,

¹The Beach Boys played at Lucerna Hall in Prague in May of 1969. Prague Spring reformer Alexander Dubček who sat in the audience, to whom they dedicated the song "Breaking Away."

Niagara, Ascalona, Golden Key, Fort Adamson. Most of them would carry back with them songs they would teach to their friends back home, returning again the following year.

The stage was set a half a century earlier outside of Prague by a man who changed his name from Josef Peterka to Bob Hurikán. Groups of young city-dwellers spent their weekends on the banks of the Sázava River, in quickly constructed temporary hovels organized into settlements and marked by totem poles:

We read the novels of Karl May and Jack London around the campfire and later, thanks to our songwriters, we sang songs. We then came up with all kinds of fun, wild *potlachs* [tramping get-togethers], masquerade balls in the woods, and real or improvised circuses and cabarets.²

Established during the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, this was the first settlement created by a group of young scouts that rejected the hierarchical, highly organized and explicitly national character of Czechoslovak scouting organizations. Driven by a desire for a more authentic experience of the natural world as well as a fascination with the American West, these "wild scouts" re-mapped their own geographical features onto the Czech countryside, as the Vltava became "Big River," the Sázava "Gold River," the Berounka "Old River." Instead of using the countryside as an expression of nation, the tramp re-imagined this same countryside creating a parallel landscape based largely on Western movies and adventure novels. The settlement described by Hurikán was named *Ztrácena Naděje*, or *Lost Hope*, and was later shortened to *Ztrácenka*, the diminutive noun-form of *ztratit*, to lose: "Little Lost One." One of the songs sung around the campfire at this settlement was called "Vlajka Vzhůru Letí" ("The Flag Flies High").

A song that calls itself an echo, that refers to a sense of both physical and temporal loss - a paradise lost, a youth forsaken - was a song that later came to be the tramp anthem and that inaugurated the June festivities in Ústí nad Labem described by Skotal, his pistol-firing cowboys were participating in the first festival of Country Western and Tramp music in Czechoslovakia.

²Bob Hurikan, *Dějiny trampingu* (Praha: Novinář, 1990), 24.

An unprecedented but not surprising public expression of a cultural phenomenon that consistently resists its own definition, the festival represents the re-emergence, re-articulation and continuation of a utopian version of camping, "a fairy tale from Friday to Monday" that is also deeply tied to a sense of displacement and longing. Descriptions of tramping move fluidly and almost imperceptibly between an activity and an aesthetic, a text and person, an expression of resistance and a sort of existential mode of being and interacting with the world. Tramping has remained a lasting part of the Czech national imaginary since the interwar period, a consistent and consistently marginal part of the Czech and Slovak cultural landscape.

I approach tramping as a multi-layered cultural phenomenon, similarly to how Robert Cantwell's describes the American Folk Revival. The latter movement he defines as "a transient and transitional cultural process ...an intricate circulatory system of cultural ideas, often entangled with but essentially independent of the official and visible system, working through informal networks of people and communities to shape the collective experience in ways that are significantly more than a simple reiteration of social power."³ Instead of writing a history of the revival, Caldwell chooses to construct the context of a "single image," or a particular moment in its public life, this case the Newport Folk Festival of 1963. In an account of Czechoslovak dissent after the Prague Spring, Jonathon Bolton challenges a conception of dissidents as a consolidated body and a single set of experiences, instead approaching dissent as "worlds," or forms of experience consisting not only of networks of individual and individual motivations but also on its practice and material traces. Both of these approaches provide an ethical and methodological framework for this thesis, which is an attempt to illustrate the type of space carved out by this cultural process in Czechoslovakia and to provide a kind of synthesis between a glorification of Czech tramping and an undermining of its importance,

³Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good : the Folk Revival* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 19.

By focusing on the Porta festivals of 1967-1969, I approach Czech tramping in terms of its public expression, and then use this expression to find the center of its consistency while at the same time capturing its multiple valences, its various modes of expression. Porta encapsulates tramping as a historical event, a series of texts, and an activity; through these modes I trace a thematic continuity based on the re-imagination and re-enactment of the physical landscape. Existing scholarship on tramping fits it into narratives of everyday or dissent in the context of state socialism. I posit instead that the kind of resistance tramping enacts, the kind of "elsewheres" that tramping imagines, are utopias that extend beyond Cold War construct and are rooted in a collectively performed and imagined mobility existing parallel to, resisting and necessarily tied broader spheres of cultural production and historical narratives in Czechoslovakia.

Porta Background

The popularity and appeal of Porta was very much a product of a historical moment in which tramping was once again becoming visible. Tramping had been popular through the 1920's and 1930's; tramp songs were regularly performed in cabarets and popular films and several tramp magazines were published and widely circulated. As its popularity increased in Czechoslovakia, however, so did its association with criminality, vagrancy, trespassing and generally indecent public behavior. The criminalization of tramping reached its peak with the 1931 Kubát Decrees, which banned "any improper conduct or behavior that threatens public order, peace, safety, morals or decency or arouses public outcry." This included "the cohabitation of unmarried couples in nature, tents or cottages, the wearing of inappropriate bathing attire outside designated bathing areas and the singing of indecent songs. The law generated a protest of about 15,000 tramps in Prague, some having travelled from as far away as Brno. This protest, and a number of smaller protests that took place afterwards, were largely successful; while the

act was not appealed, the public outcry produced by this protest resulted in its very minimal enforcement.⁴ It was finally deemed unconstitutional by Emil Hacha and lifted in 1935.

Tramping, however, suffered during the Second World War. In 1941, the entire area between the Vltava and the Sázava Rivers, which had the highest concentration of tramp settlements, was evicted for use as an SS training ground.⁵ Many tramps had already left to fight in the Spanish Civil War and did not return, while others perished in concentration camps.⁶ Some left Czechoslovakia to join the British army during the war, while others headed east to fight with the Soviet Union.⁷ Almost immediately after the 1948 coup, the Czechoslovak Communist Party began an extensive campaign against tramping activity, a campaign that continued in varying degrees until the mid 1960s. While tramping's most explicit material indicators - its texts, in the form of songbooks and magazines - were banned, the disparate and fundamentally unorganized

⁴The protests were largely mobilized through advertisements in Tramp magazine calling for a gathering in the Vinohrady district of Prague on April 19th, 1931, ten days after the official announcement of the ordinance. A major event in the history of tramping, the Kubát Decrees and their repeal were immortalized in several songs, including this one by the interwar tramp songwriter Jenda Korda:

Pak pan Kubát vydal zákaz: Trampi nesměj do lesů!
Koho v lese chytil četník zapsal ho do notesu.
Manitou to nemoh vidět Kubáta si povolal,
dal mu pořádně do těla a trampovalo se dál.

Mr. Kubat issued a ban: no tramps in the woods!
the policeman would write up whoever he found in those woods
Manitou could not take this, so he summoned Kubat
He gave him a good beating, and tramping lived on

"Kubátuv Zákon." Trampský Magazin Internet Archive. <http://www.trampsky-magazin.cz/blog/kubatuvprotitrampsky-zakon-109.html>, (All web citations accessed July 10, 2014).

⁵This included 60 villages in the triangle between the Vltava River and Sázavou up to Benes and Sedlčany, towards Kamýku nad Vltavou. Any permanent tramp settlement, cottage or lean-to was appropriated by German soldiers or sold. Václav Šmerák, "Vzpomínky na válku 1938–45 Osada Red River," *Mezi Vltavou a Sázavou: 1061-2011* (Křtiny: Mezi Řekami, 2011), 183.

⁶The tramp author Jindřich Václav Šmejkal, for instance, was transported to Terezín and died in 1941.

⁷When the Germans left in 1945 and the second Czechoslovak Republic was established, tramping did not immediately return in full - one member of the tramp settlement "Red River" describes coming back to his old settlement in 1945 only to find the remains of a German training camp and none of his old friends. Šmerák, 184.

nature of tramping made its systematic suppression difficult. Thus tramping continued and in many ways actually flourished during this period, though it took slightly different, less traceable, forms. While the number of new settlements decreased significantly,⁸ the period of the 1950s is also one in which tramping expanded to areas outside of Prague, with new settlements during this time being established in Moravia and Slovakia, around Brno and Bratislava.⁹

The cultural liberalization of the 1960's did not immediately or explicitly effect tramps. In 1963 authorities violently raided a ritual gathering of tramps outside of Děčín, and in 1964 an effort to start re-printing the most significant interwar magazine and chronicle *Tramp* was immediately suppressed. At the same time, the state-sponsored youth magazine *Mladý Svět* (*Young World*) began printing articles about tramping, while some tramps even served on its editorial board. During this time, tramping also began to be associated with other counter-cultural movements, primarily with the 'beats' of the early sixties and later the hippie movement. Porta emerged unofficially in 1966, the vision of Zbyněk Jelínek, Zdeněk Friedl and Jirka Šosvald. Administrators at House of Culture for Workers in Ústí nad Labem and enthusiasts of country and tramping music, none of them were active 'tramps,' though each had at least some ties to the tramping community.¹⁰ The festival in 1966 had no name or program; it was instead an informal gathering of musicians from the Ústí Nad Labem area and, according to Friedl,

⁸50-70 new settlements were established each year during the height of trampings popularity in the late 20's and early 30's, then consistently around 20 a year during the 30's and 40s. The average of between 1949 and 1957 was about 10 new settlements a year. Archive of tramp settlements, <http://www.kftp.cz/archiv-trampskych-osad>.

⁹Archive of tramp settlements, <http://www.kftp.cz/archiv-trampskych-osad>.

¹⁰Jiří Šosvald was a country musician, as well as the House of Culture's director. Commonly referred to as "country dědek" ("country grandpa"), he was known for playing the country-piano and wrote most of the songs for the country group Strangers, formed in 1965 and popular in the late 60s.

"quite messy."¹¹ It was initially difficult to convince tramps to attend,¹² a substantial effort to do so was not made until the following year, in 1967, when the organizers called upon a tramp musician and science fiction writer from the settlement Island, just outside of the northern Bohemian city of Liberec. Despite initial skepticism, of the 20 bands that performed in June of 1967, about half were tramp bands. In 1968, this number almost doubled, and in 1969 over 50 tramp groups performed; interest was so high, in fact, that in 1969 an initial regional qualifying round was instituted.

Tramping Histories

Tramping's resistance to definition has not prevented members of tramping communities from documenting tramping throughout its history. There exist two comprehensive 'histories' of tramping, one published in 1940 - Bob Hurikán's *History of Tramping* and Marek Waic and Jiří Kossl's *Český Tramping 1918-1945*. Bob Hurikán, or Josef Peterka, was born in 1907 in Prague. An avid scout during the first world war, Hurikán was one of the founding members of the first tramp settlement, *Ztracena Náděje*. From 1918 to 1939, Hurikán collected information and oral histories from tramp settlements throughout Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. Hurikán's history is organized according to geographic area and focuses on specific settlements, beginning with the countryside outside of Prague, ultimately moving outward in a final chapter on "tramps abroad." Waic and Kossl's *Český Tramping* takes a more explicitly historical approach; organized chronologically, they begin with tramping's inception during the first Czechoslovak Republic, then move to its period of popularization and simultaneous repression in the 1930s and to its gradual fizzling out during World War II. As in Hurikán's survey, the book ends thematically, with an chapter on "tramp culture," which details the development of tramp songs, and "tramp

¹¹"Bylo to tak neurovnaný." Zdenek Friedl in Vondrák, Jiří, and Fedor Skotal. *Legendy folku & country: jediný téměř úplný příběh folku, tramské a country písň u nás*. (Brno: Jota, 2004), 294.

¹²According to Kapitan Kid: "Without a fire, most tramps would have nothing to do with it" in *Legendy*, 295.

sports." In *Český Tramping*, Bob Hurikan's influence is put into clearest relief in the final chapter: he is given the role of leading pioneer.

Other tramping histories are less comprehensive in ambition: they are specific to a given region or settlement and do not attempt to define or represent tramping as a unified cultural phenomenon. These texts include *Kronika Trampingů v Jizerských Horách* (A Chronical of Tramping in the Jizera Mountains), and *Posázavský Pacific*, which focuses on tramping settlements and railroads in the Sázava region. These are valuable for their wealth of archival material and interviews, and provide extensive and specific details about individual tramp settlements. Currently now tramping is also narrating itself on the internet. Most settlements have a website, and most of these websites include interviews, memoirs, diary entries, song texts, photographs, scanned event brochures, song books and sometimes entire issues of tramping magazines. In some sense, these are the most fitting expressions of tramping as an extremely local phenomenon, whose history is made up of individual memories and isolated, often decontextualized, events.

Currently in the Czech Republic, the history of tramping is being narrated in the public sphere. In the past five years several museum exhibits have been devoted to tramping, a documentary about the Porta festival was filmed along with a corresponding book of interviews, documents and texts.¹³ Czech Television produced an extensive interview with the three historians and former tramps associated with this documentary about the history and significance of tramping, which paid particular attention to tramping during the 1960s and 70s. In 2011, the Czech National Museum in Prague held an exhibit entitled "New Czech Fables," an exhibit dedicated to everyday form of resistance under communism. As the tramping histories, these

¹³Published in Brno in 2004, the book is written and edited by Jiří Vondrák, and Fedor Skotal, *Legendy folku & country: jediný téměř úplný příběh folku, trampské a country písně u nás*, or *Legends of Folk & Country: Our only almost-complete story of folk, country and tramp songs*.

contributions provide valuable documentary evidence and archival material, but do not necessarily approach tramping critically while some, such as "New Czech Fables" are motivated also by the desire to build a post-communist Czechoslovak identity by recalling shared memories of everyday life under socialism. In this category are several studies and edited "almanacs" on counterculture movements in Czechoslovakia, in which tramping is dedicated a chapter among groups like "vlastáci"¹⁴ and the "beats." In these tramping is approached and defined as a youth counter-culture movements of the 1960s and 1970s whose subversiveness is tied in part to its roots in the pre-communist period.

An analysis that begins to engage on a more critically with tramping has come from Paulina Bren, who explores the reason why tramping was deemed threatening to normalization era Communist regime, and forcefully repressed, arguing that tramping was threatening to the regime because it represented a different conceptualization of citizenship, space and history then that advocated by normalization politics. She defines tramping as "a fluid yet tightly knit community built on preserving the countryside as elsewhere...and attempting to preserve its history and memory under a regime intent on forgetting its past." Bren's definition touches on the multiple dimensions of tramping that I argue for in this paper; particularly its fluidity, creative appropriation of physical space and complex relationship with its own history. At the same time Bren frames tramping in relation to the state, in relation to normalization-era policies. I, on the other hand, am attempting to explore tramping on its own terms, and in the context not only of state socialism but also broader spheres of Czechoslovak culture.

At a moment when the cultural history of Eastern Europe has tremendous traction in the academy, a deeper study of tramping has much to contribute. In an effort to move away from

¹⁴Vlastáci literally translates as the "long-hairs," a term refers to the hippies of the mid-late 1960s. The "beats" refers to Czechoslovak rock-and-rollers. Examples of these texts include Pospíšil, Filip, and Petr Blažek, *Vraťte Nám Vlasy!': První Máničky, Vlasatci a Hippies V Komunistickém Československu* (Praha: Academia, 2010) and Alexej Kusák's two-volume *Kultura a Politika v Československu, 1945-1956* (Praha: Torst, 1998).

cold war scholarship dominated by political histories and the relatively fixed east-west binaries, there has been an increased focus on the everyday of socialism, and on the inner workings of the lives of citizens. Scholars underscore the complex networks and ambiguities of previously assumed dichotomies, not just between east and west, but also fixed ideas of dissent and passivity. In this context, Bren's article is one in a series of essays focused on the physical landscape of state socialism, and specifically on the way that people interacted with physical space in the context of their everyday lives. An examination of tramping as a sort of everyday activity based on the creative appropriation of space, and as providing an always possible space of resistance, is closely tied to another recently published collection of essays, *Socialist Escapes* edited by Cathleen Giustino, Catherine Plum and Alexander Vari. This collection focuses on particular forms and modes of escape in East-Central Europe as a means of conceptualizing and complicating the sphere of the everyday under state socialism. Modes of escape in this case are not necessarily classified as dissent or "second, mutually exclusive realities" but as part of a everyday life under socialism.¹⁵ This leads back to *Worlds of Dissent*, in which Jonathon Bolton challenges the distinction between the everyday and the 'extraordinary' by challenging the conception of dissent as a consolidated body and single set of experiences. By approaching Czech dissent as multiple worlds of historically and geographically contingent experiences, his is an attempt to capture the diversity of experience of a traditionally cohesive category. Mine, on the other hand, is an attempt to write the cohesion of a phenomenon whose essentially diffusion leads to scholarship that focuses on the specific and discourages critical study.

Outline of Paper

¹⁵While I do not define tramping purely as a mode of escape, the particular framework provided by these essays is useful in shaping an understanding of tramping as being involved in a process of distancing, as having a performative and cultural dimension as well as a spatial one. One set of opposing categories assumed by Veri et al's collection is a difference between a parallel utopian vision oriented towards change, and the carving out a temporary escape within the actually existing everyday. In the context of Czechoslovakia, tramping provided both; it was a consistent, normalized alternative.

I attempt to write tramping using its own voices and texts, attempting to capture *how* instead of just *what* it was. I use interviews, memoirs, articles and photographs from tramping websites and magazines, festival recordings and song texts as well as a documentary film produced by Pavel Březina in 1964, documenting a ritual gathering of tramps in Northern Bohemia. Thus my project differs methodologically from both the historical studies I have mentioned and the encyclopedic histories written by tramps themselves. I specifically try to avoid writing a narrative history and as a result the history of tramping emerges interwoven through the body of the text. The paper is organized thematically, according to what I present as three specific 'modes' encapsulated in the Porta festivals of the late 1960's; as a historical event, a series of texts, and an activity. Through all these modes I trace a thematic continuity based on the an imagined and enacted mobility and re-appropriation of the physical landscape.

As historical events, the first Porta festivals are an expression of a phenomenon that is in many ways intensely present, informed by and informing popular cultural streams in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. They also represented the first consolidated public expression of tramping, the public display of a self-conscious collectivity debating, and creating, its own history and that ultimately rejects this kind of historical definition and articulating a sort of thematic continuity. I posit that thematic continuity is at the center of Czech tramping and it is indicated primarily in the festivals' texts— in its songs as well as in the prose pieces submitted for the authors competitions. I will then approach tramping as an activity and a performance. The Porta festivals became specifically tramp events during these first years, as the event itself became a tramp gathering, or *potlach*. The wilderness was enacted by the tramp not only through practice but through a very specific set of rituals and symbolic objects. These materials of tramping - the symbols, the flags and rituals, making it a concrete yet mobile phenomenon, which had very real consequences in 1970, when the Porta festival was actually banned and had

to disperse to various locations in the Czech Republic. Trappings resistance not only to place but to its own definition is part of what allowed it to be the base of a certain kind of resistance during normalization. The Portas of the late 1960's, however, illustrate that this was a phenomenon that has a longer more complicated history and a resistance that was beyond a specific regime; as a kind of performed imaginary, both physically and figuratively, tramping created and enacted an always potential but not quite realized space of resistance.

Porta as Event: Tramping in its Time

The success of the first Porta of 1967 is largely due to the involvement of Jaroslav Velínský, or "Kapitán Kid." Born in 1932, Kid wrote tramp songs throughout the 1950s and by the early 1960s these songs were already considered classics.¹⁶ Their popularity is at least partly due to the fact that Kid travelled more than most more typical tramps. Kid grew up in Prague, and spent his teenage years tramping in the countryside around the city before moving to Liberec in 1959. Here he worked in a pub, writing songs and short science fiction and adventure novels, and producing shows at the Musical Theatre in town. During the weekend he spent time in various tramp settlements around Liberec before establishing his own "Island" in 1964. He thus had many contacts in the tramping community over a large geographic area. In 1967, Kid organized a large *potlach*, or ritual tramp gathering, at the historical tramp settlement Rykítádo. Here he gathered tramps from several settlements in the area, including two young brothers and musicians Miki and Wabi Ryvola, of "Zlatý Klíč" ("Golden Key"), who had just formed the tramp group "Hoboes," as well the young banjo player Jan Čvančara from the tramp group "Mohykáni." When Porta's organizers asked Kid to contact and convince tramps to travel to and participate in the festival, these were the people that Kid immediately thought of and asked.¹⁷

Porta as a "Country and Western" Event

While Kapitán Kid acted as a sort of cultural representative for tramps he also moved

¹⁶He wrote a song by the name of "Krinolína" (Crinoline) in 1959, which was sung in settlements throughout the 1960s. Jindřich Šrejber, a musician and later organizer of Porta recalls: "When I was tramping in the 1960s, Kapitán Kid belonged to the generation of classic interwar tramp songwriters - Jarka Motl, Géza Včelička and others." Jindřich Šrejber, "Jindřich Šrejber: Kamarád i Velký Sběratel." Interview by Radek Strnad. *Deník*, February 2012, <http://www.denik.cz/hudba/jindrich-srejber-kapitan-kid20120224.html>.

¹⁷Kid was initially skeptical that he would attract much support, thinking his network was "much smaller than the festivals organizers seemed to think." Jaroslav Velínský, Interview with Kapitán Kid in *Legendy*, 30

quite fluidly in and out of the tramping's sphere, an example of the fluidity of genre that tramp songs that was clearly evident at the first Porta festivals, and the flexibility of tramping as a category. Though excerpts from his adventure novels and song texts could be found in the first samizdat editions of *Tramp* in the mid-1960s, he also occasionally wrote for the youth magazine *Mladý Svět*, which began to publish short articles on tramping in 1964.¹⁸ Because of these articles, and perhaps also because of his associations with people like Jelínek and Friedl, many of his contemporaries doubted his status as an authentic tramp.¹⁹ At the same time, he wrote songs that were considered tramp classics, not because they were in the style of tramp songs at the time, but because they were "derived from personal experiences of tramping, from his relationships with other tramps."²⁰ Before becoming an iconic tramp songwriter, Kid would write songs in a bigband style, emulating composers like Ježek, or V+W; he also wrote a few popular "šlagra" and songs for cabarets. It was only later, he claims, when he moved to Liberec and started to write tramp songs.²¹

Kid recalls a certain amount of skepticism when Porta's organizers asked him to contact tramps, immediately foreseeing the difficulties of convincing tramps to attend a nationwide festival that also incorporated country and western music. He himself complained that country music was "limited to a certain set of instruments, while a tramp band can use any instrument."²²

According to historian Fedor Skotal, the advent of Czech country was associated with the

¹⁸The first issue of *Mladý Svět* with an article on tramping was in 1964.

¹⁹Kapitán Kid. "Rozhovor s Jaroslavem Velinským – Kapitánem Kidem." Interview by Milan Belmondo Plch. *Folk and Country*, December 2007, http://www.folkcountrý.cz/rozhovory/rozhovor-kapitan_kid1207.html

²⁰Šrejbar, Interview, <http://www.denik.cz/hudba/jindrich-srejber-kapitan-kid20120224.html>

²¹Kapitán Kid, Interview, http://www.folkcountrý.cz/rozhovory/rozhovor-kapitan_kid1207.html

²²Kapitán Kid, "Jizerské hory: Rozhovor - Jizerky na mě zapůsobily jako zjevení." Interview by Pavel Vinklat. *Časopis Krkonoše - Jizerské hory* (August 2004), http://krkonose.krnep.cz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7732&Itemid=4authorship

romantic era of Czech popular music, the period of radio singers with "beautiful voices like Cortez, Vasicek and Jiří Suchý,"²³ as opposed to the western songs sung by the interwar tramp. Despite this, and despite the distinction between country and tramp songs as two separate categories at Porta, the origin and actual content of this distinction is blurry; the category "country" in fact, is one that in many ways emerged from and developed alongside tramping.

The first country bands to participate in Porta, if not directly associated with tramp settlements all had some connections to tramping. The "Greenhorns", for instance, were one of the most famous Czech country bands throughout the 1960s and 70s , and all were from the tramp settlement Hejkal. While they met by singing tramp songs at this settlement, these songs "began to seem a bit archaic..on Radio Munich we started hearing this curious new music, where violins fiddled to these insane rhythms."²⁴ Caravel Western from Slovakia were named after their settlement outside of Trnava; their renditions of "Lonesome, Lonesome " ("Zátoka") and "Jealous Heart " ("Som tak Sam"), however, won in the "country "song category in 1967 and then in the "modern" country category in 1969. Similarly, the band Boot Hill from the settlement Lone Star, identified as tramps and participated in the 1967 gathering at Rykitádo organized by Kapitán Kid; yet they only competed in the "country" category at Porta, the head singer stating in an interview that throughout his period of tramping "tramping music inspired me but I never tried to write a tramping text. I wrote about seventy texts but they are always considered "bluegrass." The Rangers, who also performed and won in the country category at the first two Porta festivals were not considered a "tramp" band, though they were extremely popular among tramps and shared many of the same texts. Before performing at a Porta festival in 2000, one of the bands long-standing members, Jiří Weissner, described this performance as "moving back into

²³Skotal, Fedor, "Porta Je Brána," *Portyr*, 2010, <http://www.eportyr.cz/oporte/milniky-porty/728-porta-je-brana-3-mladiek-vnkorzetu>

²⁴Interview with Jan Vyčítal in *Legendy*, 36.

the "tramping womb" (trampského luna). This not only indicates that Porta during this time was considered a tramp event, but that he identified with it, even if he was not explicitly connected with it at the time.

Part of this convergence and overlapping of genres is to some extent due to cultural liberalization in the early 1960s, and access to the sounds and texts of the American folk revival accounted for further developments in tramp music. Once again accessible in Czechoslovakia, American radio broadcasts through Radio Free Europe, as well as Radio Luxembourg, and Radio Munich not only played American pop hits but also songs of the American folk revival; artists such as Hank Williams were played alongside adaptations of American folk classics by the Brothers Four and the Kingston Trio. In 1961, a book of American folk poetry was translated by, among others, Josef Škvorecký, and in 1962, *Písničky z Amerického Západu* (Songs of the American West) provided the Czech texts to American classics like Jesse James, Chajda Drnova (Little Old Sod Shanty), Zátoka (Lonesome, Lonesome), John Hardy and Plachnice John B (John B Sails). Beginning also in the early 1960s, Czech writer Ivo Fischer translated several volumes of American folk songs, including a very influential book of American Protest Songs. These songs were simply texts whose melodies were transmitted orally; they were often songs that were sung around tramp campfires before being played by both country bands and folk singers at local bars and clubs.

1960s tramp songs were also influenced by other musical imports. In 1963 a small gathering of tramp groups at the Lucerna in Prague, the first such gathering since the 1948 coup, which were described as "pure tramp songs, but built on a rock and roll beat."²⁵ Historian Pavel Sonda describes this phenomenon in a *History of Rock and Roll in Eastern Bohemia*, providing a detailed account of how many of the country, rock and folk groups in the mid 1960s, also sprang

²⁵Skotal, <http://www.eportyr.cz/oporte/milniky-porty/728-porta-je-brana-3-mladiek-vnkorzetu>

from tramp groups.²⁶ The rock group Orion, for instance, used to be called Apači, and was named for the settlement all its members belonged to around Lanskrout, while the František Tomyška of the rock group Mariola describes its first "timid rehearsals, trials" as beginning around campfires as early as 1963, where they tried out songs by the Shadows and the Beatles before they took them to clubs in Pardubice (Parama).²⁷ The confluence of the tramp and hippies in the 1960s also grew throughout the decade. Jirka Tomášek from the settlement TO Westman remembers singing not only tramp songs around the campfire, also songs in the style of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, and later the Czech folk singer Karel Kryl.²⁸ At the same time another tramp group associated with this settlement - Westmeni, were a traditional tramp group that sung almost exclusively classics from the interwar period.²⁹ In all of these cases, as with bands like the Greenhorns, the activity of tramping provided the space, literally and figuratively, for participating and trying out these other alternatives, for improvising and playing with new forms, in some cases before venturing into broader spheres of popular culture. In this light, Jiří Weisser's return to the "tramping whom" is not so much a return to a familiar or to a clearly defined canon of songs but a return to the sort of open space that tramp singing provided at this time.

Links to the Past

One of the winning performances at the Porta of 1968 was a song entitled "Covboj z Čerokee" (Cowboy from Cherokee). Performed by the traditional tramp group Duo Červanek, the song is a transcription of "Take Me Back to My Boots and Saddle" originally written by

²⁶Sondal, Pavel. *Z Histori Východočeského Rocku, 60. leta - příběhy beatových skupin*, (Vydavatelství Jaroslav Hruza, Praha 2001), 22, 56, 78.

²⁷Sondal, 244.

²⁸In the summer of 1971, he was one of the initial founders and participants at the "Country and Western" club in Jablonec Nad Nisou. Pavel Vinklár, *Kronika trampingu v Jizerských horách, 1934-2004* (Liberec: Knihy 555), 160.

²⁹They did not perform at Porta but featured on two recordings of tramp songs that came out during this period, *Tramprská Romance* from Panton and *Ztrácenka Zpíva*, from Supraphone.

Teddy Powell and recorded for the first time in 1935 by Bing Crosby. That same year, in Prague, a young Ukranian-Jewish jazz musician David Stoljarovič, or Harry Harden, recorded the song with his jazz orchestra. The song was also printed by Esta, having already been translated into Czech by a sort of mysterious tramp composer, Jindřich Václav Šmejkal³⁰ and was a tramp classic, one of the original "Písničky z Kapsy" ("Pocket Songs"), a tramp songbook printed in the 1930s and then re-issued in 1964. In a Bratislava tramp song contest in 1940, the song was associated with the Slovak settlement Zálesak, whose band *Zálesaci* learned the song from a former member of the original tramp settlement outside of Prague, *Ztrácenka*.³¹ The text performed by Duo Červanek in 1968 was the same, almost word for word, as that performed by the Zálesaci in 1940 which, though similar, is markedly different from the original printed text.

This song illustrates the fluidity of origins and genre that characterized tramp music not only in the 1960s, but in the interwar period as well. "Covboy z Čerokee" was both a tramp song and a popular song; it would have been heard by a Prague dance orchestra in an urban cabaret, as well as around a campfire at *Ztrácenka*. Interwar tramp songs were an eclectic combination of popular, folk, and jazz. According to Buřt Braun, leader of the group 'Song Club' in the 1920s, member of the settlement Utah on the Vltava, and one of the first judges at Porta, texts were usually original, or at least originally transcribed, and melodies were often popular and traditional American, British, Hungarian and Russian melodies.³² Many of tramping's bards also wrote operettas and musicals and some were involved in more progressive strands of entertainment. *Ztrácenka's* Jarka Mottl, one of the first tramp songwriters, also acted as a

³⁰Šmejkal provided the texts to many tramp songs that are now considered classics - Sdilonost and Zpoved -as well as published a book of western themed poems, *Kormidlo a Whiskey*.

³¹"Spevacké Preteky Bratislavských Trampských Osád v Rokoch 1940 - 1956," http://www.trampnet.sk/hudba/spevacke_sutaze/spevacke_sutaze.htm

³²Braun in *Legendy*, also in the chronicles of the settlement "Utah," "Tramp Net Vitajte Na Stránke!" http://www.trampnet.sk/osady/utah_praha/utah.html.

scenographer for several popular musicals in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as with the avant garde theatre group Osvobozené divadlo (Prague Free Theatre), working together with, among others, the legendary Czech jazz composer Jaroslav Ježek. Jenda Korda, author of the tramp anthem, directed a group called Settleři (Settlers). Reaching their peak during the height of tramp popularity in the 1930's, Settleři performed in numerous popular operettas and are featured in many popular movies during this period.³³ While their "trampness" in these movies is subtly, circuitously indicated in their attire, they usually just provide background music for the drama on screen. At the same time, all of its members were tramps.

It significant that this older generation of tramps and tramp songwriters were also present at Porta, and also assisted in mobilizing tramps to participate and attend. Names like Jenda Korda, Jarda Mottl, Buřt Braun and Tony Hořínek were very familiar to younger tramps. These were individuals who wrote hundreds of songs sung around campfires during the interwar period, at clandestine festivals throughout a period of serious repression after 1948, and on spontaneously forged hiking trails at the moment of the first Portas. They were individuals whose songs made up the tramp songbooks that re-emerged in 1964 after nearly a decade of being banned, whose texts were memorized and melodies recognized even if the names themselves could only vaguely recalled. They were also names that older non-tramps would recognize from sheet music printed in the 1930s and 1940s, when tramp music was extremely popular; they were names recognized by the organizers of the festival, for instance, who called upon these men to judge the tramping category for the first actual Porta festival of 1967, individuals whose authority was still respected, and who were deemed appropriate arbiters of a good tramp song.³⁴

³³Some of these include: Dobrý tramp Bernášek (1933), Kapitán Korkorán (1934), To byl český muzikant (1940), Artur a Leontýna, Přítelkyně pana ministra, Štěstí pro dva, Za tichých nocí (vše 1940), U pěti veverek (1943).

³⁴Many of the traditional tramp groups that participated in the festivals of 1967 and 1968 received news of the festival through these figures, including the traditional tramp group Duo Červanek from Prague, who heard about the first Porta festival from tramp composers Jenda Korda and Tony Horinek and the group Vavasatch, whose

Another connection of Porta and its past was Kapitán Kid ability to gather tramps not only because his reach and influences spanned genres and geographic area, but he was also an important figure in uniting several generations of tramps. Prior to the Porta, a large group of tramps from various settlements gathered at the settlement Rykitádo, a legendary settlement in Northern Bohemia established during the 1930s. Organized in part by Kapitan Kid, who brought together many of the settlements around Liberec and involved many of the musicians who would later perform at Porta. An intergenerational gathering, the event was an attempt to resurrect this historical settlement to link the young tramps of 1967 with their inter-war equivalent. It was also Rykitádo, while at the same time creating a new kind of tramp community. The gathering was imbued with an undeniable spirit of commemoration; the event lasted several days and included the ritual rebuilding of old huts, while old flags were re-instated³⁵ while Kapitán Kid started filming documentary about the history of the settlement starting in 1932. The explicit historical consciousness highlighted a rift, or at least an increasingly apparent difference between some of the younger tramps and their older counterparts. Pictures taken at this time are often divided between groups of former Rykitádo inhabitants and tramping's younger participants. One tramp who was present at this event, "Joe" Ježek, speculates that these were differences would have been easily overcome, as a new tramping community and identity was forged that combined both new and older elements.³⁶ Instead, 1968 brought a wave of emigration and an end of participation was encouraged by Jarka Mottl.^H

³⁵Not only was the old Rykitado flag used, but also the "historical" emblems associated with some of the other settlements. The resurrection of Rykitádo was also occurring simultaneously with other commemorative activity - Supraphone released two albums dedicated to leading tramp songwriters of the interwar era, while Panton put out the first series of "Trampská Romance" LP's, which featured traditional renditions of inter-war era tramp songs. This was a project in which modern tramps were also involved - on an album dedicated to Jarka Mottl and named after the first tramp settlement (*Ztracenka Zpíva*, or *Ztracenka Sings*) - newer tramp groups performed alongside traditional groups. In addition, the magazine *Tramp*, which started being published again in April of 1968, after a 30 year hiatus, dedicated sections to chapters from the Hurikán's *History of Tramping* along side other profiles of tramping's "heroes."

³⁶Joe Ježek. Interview in Vinklát, 60.

Rykitádo's short resurrection. At the same time, this rift was even more apparent, and in some ways climaxed, at the 1969 Porta.

1969 Porta

The festival's first years consisted of both traditional and 'modern' tramp groups, and while there may have been traces of conflict between the two camps, the atmosphere is most often described as exceptionally open and mutually appreciative. Mojmir Buchtela, of the traditional Brno tramp group Vavasatch explains that when they went to Porta the first time, groups like the Hoboes had "not yet taken hold" and that the atmosphere was one of genuine admiration for these new tramps singing "a completely different tune."³⁷ However the 1969 Porta was characterized by debates between traditionalists and a younger generation of tramp musicians interested in incorporating elements of other genres, including elements of country and big-beat which were being experimented with around tramp campfires. Older tramps called those singing new tramp songs "big-beaters" referring to the Czechoslovak take on American rock music popular in the mid 1960s. According to Wabi Ryvola: "While the people in Ústí were applauding newer tramp songs, heated discussion blew up, for instance, whether the double bass, is a tramp instrument, and what exactly classifies as a "tramp instrument"...so Krist'ák () took piano in to the woods at Panenské Týnec, proving that a tramp instrument is anything you can take into the woods!" According to Fedor Skotal, "while the tramp movement manifests incredible endurance, it started to desire a new identity. It became clear that the interwar tangos and foxtrot weren't enough..a new generation of artists and amateur artists wanted their own form of expression, and found an eager audience generation."

The rift of 1969 was strong enough that the organizers debated separating the genre into two categories - modern and traditional tramp songs. This decision, however, was rejected, both

³⁷"Chronicles of Vavasatch," <http://www.trampnet.sk/hudba/vavasatch/vavasatch.htm>

by the organizers and the tramps on the jury, who decided that the audience themselves should determine what qualified as the best tramp song.³⁸ Until 1975 the tramp category was the only category at Porta not determined by a qualified judge but by the audience. When the audience was able to make the decision, the more modern tramp songs would win, as they appealed to a younger generation, using tropes and styles that were familiar and more resonant with the public. This led to a sort of natural development and expansion of the tramp song canon to include its modern variants. While debates about tramp songs and tramping in general may have raged on, in the context of the festival as well as within individual settlements, the tramp song at Porta remained undefined.

The debates at the Porta festival of 1969, and the commemorative activity surrounding it, reveal tramping as a cultural category and phenomenon whose internal differences are important primarily insofar as they indicate traces of a self-conscious, self-questioning collective, whose lack of 'resolution' to these differences indicate both a resistance and an inability to define itself. Yet despite this resistance, and despite the ability of tramping to compound itself with several subcultural movements and even move within spheres of the mainstream, there does exist a category 'tramp,' the expression of which was being contended at Porta and a strongly felt, if not clearly articulated, sense of what constitutes a tramp song. Regardless of its style, tramp songs are bound by a specifically defined ethos that envisioned and embodied in the act of tramping. Kapitan Kid claims that he was only able to write tramp songs once he started "seriously tramping." while the names of tramp groups always refer to the act of tramping - either reflecting elements of travel or referring to a given settlement - Stopa (footstep), Hoboes, Příboj (surf)³⁹, Vavasatch, Caravel Western. A tramp song

³⁸ At this point the audience themselves was made up primarily of tramps, but also including non-tramps, fans of country music more broadly, or the new category of folk.

³⁹Tramps often identified themselves as "sailors," sailing the Vltava on homemade canoes and rafts.

is a song that evokes the act of tramping and that arises from the state of tramping, it is a cultural product that both describes a practice and evokes it, and thus despite generational rifts and acts of revival, continue to be deeply tied to a sense of presence, to the practice of tramping itself and its lived experience. Trampings capacity to provide the background while at the same time take on contemporary cultural currents is tied to, and can to some extent be explained by, a commitment to presence, or practice, which is also tied to a resistance to historicize, a resistance to maintaining a consistent collective narrative. This resistance combined with the emergence of tramping as a sort of historical phenomenon, a self-conscious collective with a very distinct narrative, is what distinguishes the period of tramping that the Porta festivals articulated and helped to define.

Porta as Text: Envisioning a Wilderness

"The Gates of Bohemia " consists of two large, steep rock formations that fall into the Labe river in a canyon-like valley outside of Ústí Nad Labem, in northwestern Bohemia. It is actually just one of many 'gates' in the area that mark a dramatic shift in landscape on the German-Czech border. Referred to in the 17th and 18th centuries as the Bohemian Massif and by geologists as Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland, this area is the largest and most important sandstone landscape in Europe. An unusually dramatic landscape, its deep-cut river valleys and steep cliffs were a source of inspiration for German Romantic Heimat tourists as well as for Franz Kafka and Karl May. Because tramping began as a largely urban, working-class phenomenon, its activity was most concentrated outside of industrial cities like Ústí. *Porta*, however, also had a larger symbolic meaning; *Porta* was not just a gate into Ústí Nad Labem, but a "gate into what the world actually means." *Porta* evokes a central part of tramp mythology, the silent '*Bohemica*' in this case referring to any unknown landscape, this area representing, throughout the Czech lands, the type of wilderness that the tramp imagined and occupied.

"Porta Bohemica," as such, was not part of the tramp's landscape, and this specific name did not appear on any map of this "northern section."⁴⁰ Instead of Ústí Nad Labem, or the nearby town of Liberec, this area was the site of the tramp settlements Alaska and Klondike, Northern Star and Rykítádo. While the Vltava was the tramp's "Big River," the Sazava "Gold River" and the Berounka "Old River," the Labe does not have a name of its own. When tramping began after the the First World War, it was an urban phenomenon primarily concentrated outside of Prague.

⁴⁰When Bob Hurikan refers to this specific area did not have a romantic name; the settlements in this area he lumped together to form "Severní Část." *Hurikán*, 146.

With the increased printing and distribution of tramp songs as well as significant economic decline, tramping became much more popular in the 1930's, and spread outward to areas across Bohemia and Moravia.⁴¹ It was during this time that tramps started to explore and 'occupy' this border region, partly for its wild, rugged and largely uninhabited landscape, and partly because it was easily accessible. The fact that the Labe did not have a tramp name was quickly addressed by Kapitan Kid. Referring to a claim made famous by science fiction writer Ludvik Souček that instead of the Vltava flowing into the Labe, the Labe actually flowed into the Vltava, which makes them both "Big River." Thus in the documents and writings and during the course of the festivities, the festival was referred to as a grand, an unprecedented "gathering of tramps, pirates and cowboys on the northern banks of the Big River."⁴² While some tramps travelled to Porta by train, other travelled by small boat, usually some sort of rowboat or canoe, but often also by ferry - as far as traveling to Usti from the areas outside of Prague, it did in some sense function as the same river, a continuation of the Velka Řeka which was allowed, according to the tramp's re-invented topography, to encompass both. This is just one small example of creative appropriation of landscape, the re-naming and re-defining of important landmarks and geographic spaces that defines the tramps relationship to physical environment.

Portas Songs and the Tramp's Wilderness

Songs are the dominant and most visible mode of tramp expression and Porta thus serves as an ideal window into tramping as, per Cantwell, "cultural process." Songs define a community of tramps by providing representative figures, by representing a communal act and by providing the tramp with a text that abstracts and articulates the act of tramping, representing the romantic image then enacted by the tramp, providing an image of the tramping landscape, the archetypical

⁴¹After World War II, tramping began to appear in Slovakia, especially in the areas around Bratislava.

⁴²Koříšek's introduction to the 1968 festival. Printed in *Legendy*, 179.

figure of the tramp and a visual depiction of their journey. Songs also highlight the similarities and give us a sense of the continuity of the landscape and the figure that they present, as well as some subtle developments.

Written by the Ryvola brothers in 1962 and among and around the settlement of Zlatý Klíč, "Hejno Vran," or "Flock of Crows" was the first modern tramp song to win at Porta in 1968 has since become a tramp standard.

When over the forest clearing flies a flock of crows
and the summers pollen has long been sold,
autumn announces itself with the clear mornings' chill
in these mornings he walks alone,
he who long ago bade the city farewell

Wandering like this along the burnt grass, unable to say goodbye to summer
you look at the distant landscape, to which you've devoted your life
Above your head circles a flock of crows
and there's an ocean of white stars
surely you won't set up a tent underneath,
if I know you, you'll sleep under the stars
as autumn quickly approaches

In the first stanza, this song provides the archetypal figure of the tramp as someone who walks alone through the woods, a figure dwarfed and announced by a flock of crows, a figure distinctly positioned outside and against the city. It is a figure that wanders even when the climate is not appropriate for it, whose wandering transcends physical comfort and is also somehow beyond time, as well as fundamentally against it, refusing to, or unable to, say goodbye to summer. He who has long bade the city farewell probably just left the night before, as tramping was primarily a weekend activity. This figure is also a subject whose livelihood and identity is in some sense determined by the vision of a distant landscape. By acknowledging the landscape as distant, the tramp is associated with a kind of always being elsewhere. Immediately, however, we are taken back to the landscape at hand, to the clearing and the crows, as the tramp (not just an amorphous figure in this stanza, but a specific person being addressed) enacts this elsewhere, placing

themselves in the distant landscape as the flock of crows become an ocean of stars under which this tramp subject places themselves. The second stanza is also interesting in that it moves from describing the archetypical figure of the tramp to addressing a specific tramp – In the context of the first Porta, as the first modern tramp song to be performed in the context of a festival of tramps, it is also addressing the audience, a body of tramps or potential tramps - it creates and identifies, in some ways, a collective subject that probably should be sleeping under the stars. I think I need some more about the kind of wilderness imagined and the kind of tramping subject described during the interwar period.

In 1968, the Hoboes followed Hejno Vran with Poslední Míle, which reflects the same kind of journey described in Hejno Vran:

My friend blows out the fire
it is morning, and I pull onward
I forget my woes
The wind took them away with it

The snow and desert behind me
my steps move with the clouds
through steppes and forests I push forward
along a path both good and evil

The journey in this song is an emancipatory one, an escape from woes, very similar in sentiment to the tramp in another song performed at Porta, a traditional tramps song composed in 1931 by Sally Prkno. "Kačák Huči jak Mississippi", which was also performed at the 1968 Porta by a traditional tramp group from Prague, Duo Červánek, is narrated by a lonely tramp, "sick of this pestilent life," and longing for this journey, the 'cliffs' of St. Johns Rapids (Svatojánské proudy) and the Kačák river.

The Kačák hums like the Mississippi, lazily rolling in the distance
The sun reflecting red arrows off Svatojan's cliffs
I look sadly towards the blue hills
the sun beats down on me as I sit on my doorstep, singing a desperate song

The tramp in this song longs not only for this journey, he also mentions specific tramp settlements:

All the boys have come to raise their cups - where?
In Nibovace, Nipigon, in Scarlet, and in Ascalon,
in Crete and then in Galveston, Fort Adamson -HEY!

Similarly, in the refrain of *Poslední Míle*, which was performed right after *Hejno Vran* at the 1968 Porta, Miki Ryvola refers to the end of his journey, the country of his calling, to which he returns after years of wandering

to sleep at home once more, what a simple dream
to play music with my brother, to spend the day singing
to doze at the settlement, into the night, worn out
to have a home - thats all I desire
and all that I dream of in this last mile

This refrain reveals the tramp as having a particular destination, as going towards a specific place. While the wilderness of the tramp is defined in terms of the wander, in terms of the practice of tramping, in terms of mobility; but it is also always tied to a specific place. This sort of dialectic between place and mobility, between escape and return, home and elsewhere is captured in one of the most famous traditional tramp songs. *V Dáli Za Horama* played an important role in the 1969 Porta. Despite the rift between modern and traditional tramps during this period, and despite the fact that some of these completely innocuous, romantic, almost heartbreakingly utopian, tramp songs were being violently booed, *V Dali Za Horama* was performed spontaneously by the traditional tramp group *Desperados*, receiving a standing ovation and overwhelming applause and support.

In the distance behind the mountains stands a little shack
A river flows underneath, above it a white cliff
A flood came one day, taking with it the little shack
now two friends have no place to sleep
alone, they wander the world, looking for their shack
where the little shack stood, still stands the white cliff
don't cry, dear friend, for the old shack

before the spring comes we will build a new one
before spring came a new shack arose
A river flowing underneath, above it a white cliff

Tramping's Landscape and the National Revival

Tramping re-invented and enacted a wilderness contested, unfamiliar and uncultivated; it is a landscape that can in many ways be projected anywhere, a landscape that has yet to be explored and in which these explorers are constantly lost, despite having access to trails, despite being a few miles from the nearest train station or small town. What *Porta Bohemica* was for German tourists, the Romantic, unknown, uncultivated "Bohemia" was to the tramp. Tramping envisioned and enacted spaces in a way that actively resisted dominant conceptions of landscape, particularly the landscape of the Czech national revival. Essentially a literary and historical movement, the revival refers to the construction of the *česky lid* (the "czech people," or a Czech national consciousness) which developed with the romantic nationalism of the 19th century revival period, and was used at pivotal moments of nation-building, both during Masaryk's first Czechoslovak Republic and after the Communist Party takeover in 1948.⁴³ Revival poet Jan Kollár's *Slávy Dcera* takes the form of a pilgrimage through the Czech and Slovak lands, beginning in Sála, then to the land's three most important rivers - the Vltava, Labe and Danube and finally ending in the Tatra Mountains. While the poem is primarily a pan-Slavic vision, Kollár refers specifically to the linden tree as representing the Czech nation, modest and unyielding, "its soft wood and sweet blossoms standing for Czech tenderness and graciousness."⁴⁴ In a fabricated historical manuscript "discovered" in 1817, a document which nonetheless greatly inspired Czech Revivalists, including Smetana's most famous opera *Libuše*, begins with a depiction of the Vltava River whose "troubled waters" indicate a quarrel between

⁴³Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia : A Czech History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998)

⁴⁴The symbol that was heavily used during revival period, and then during the first Republic when it was used, for instance, on state currency.

the brothers of Libuše's brothers over their fathers inheritance

Why Vltava, troublest thou thy water?
Troublest thou thy silver-foamy water?
Hath a tempest wild disquieted thee,
In the wide sky scattering streaming storm-clouds,
Washing all the tops of the green mountains,
Washing out the loam, whose sands are golden?

The Vltava is again depicted in Smetana's *Ma Vlast*, *My Country*, or *My Homeland*, a tone poem that evokes the physical geography of the Bohemia. In "Vltava," Smetana follows its course through Bohemia and Moravia until it merges and disappears into the Labe, evoking pastoral images of meadows and woods, along with several folk themes - village festivals, castles, palaces and ruins all feature prominently in this musical depiction of the Bohemian landscape. Made up of six symphonic poems, three of these are named after physical features of the landscape; all of these, however, incorporate and end up with images of the folk; Blaník is the site of an army of knights led by Wenceslas; Zlín ends with a village festival. In the context of the National Revival, landscape functioned primarily as a space onto which a distant, unified past could be projected, and onto which the history of a unified people could be placed, or in the words of Martin Procházka, a tendency to replace "romantic nature with the idea of the folk."⁴⁵ The romanticism of the revival period was expressed primarily through literacy and history, and its cultural products overwhelmingly focused on depictions of human activity. One of the most famous romantic painters of the revival period, Josef Mánes, painted landscapes inspired by the life of the country, who for him represented the ideals of purity and humanism. Czech cultural critic Vladimír Macura, in an essay on the Czech national anthem, bemoans the vagueness of the landscape rendered by Karel Tyl, a pastoral, paradisaical image of a blind man, whose "murmuring rivers", "rustling pinewoods" and "glorious gardens" could easily be anywhere else in the world. For him, the physical landscape described in the national anthem, and that could

⁴⁵In Stephen Prickett, *European Romanticism: A Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

easily be applied to numerous other depictions of the natural landscape during this time, was a means of constructing a homeland, understood in terms of a natural geographic and historical region in the life of a historical community that is "alienated from the present, relegated to the realm of sheer idealism."⁴⁶

Landscape and Nation

Once this ideal was given form as the first Czechoslovak republic, landscape took on an explicit, symbolic function. With the existence of a physically marked, if not culturally bound nation-state came an attempt to construct an aesthetically consolidated national landscape, which involved the removal of German and Hapsburg-era monuments and cultural symbols, as well as 'flag wars' in border areas, where German and Czech flags would be continually removed and raised.⁴⁷ The project of constructing a solely Czech physical landscape also extended to the aural landscape, with impromptu musical gatherings in border areas and the regulation of the public singing of national songs, classifies as "demonstrative behavior."⁴⁸ Interwar scouting organizations - *Junáci* - were also part of this project. A site for organized hikes, tournaments, and the singing of national folk songs, the scout's countryside was tied to the performance and expression of nation, serving the practical and pedagogical function of teaching young

⁴⁶For Macura, literature provided a tangible, concrete landscape; the romantic nationalism of the revival period was expressed through literacy and history, often combined with the literal construction of a national history through the transcription of oral traditions and narratives and the construction (and sometimes the literal fabrication of) historical documents, like the one found on Green Hill, which now thought to have been written by two nationalist poets, Václav Hanka and Josef Linda.

⁴⁷This, according to Sayer, was largely rhetorical and in this sense unsuccessful. In *Coasts of Bohemia*, one of Sayers major arguments is that the use of the physical space to define a czech popular imaginary was especially difficult and important due to its location, its geographic and cultural-mythological centrality, its constantly shifting borders and until the expulsion of its German citizens after the Second World War, its relatively poorly defined citizenry.

⁴⁸According to the spontaneous singing of the national anthem and the sounds of gunfire dominated the soundscape of the first Republic's border areas. Bohemian German and Czech nationalist organizations, as well as Czechoslovak Communists, held noisy demonstrations on the Saxon side of the border. Such regulation of the 'sound' of a consolidated czech nation was also legally codified Law 5/5 1869, No. 66 restricted playing german national songs in public places. Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Czechoslovak citizens the love of nation through a love and 'mastery' of countryside. While its national character made scouting itself threatening to the post-1948 Communist regime, the use of the landscape as a projection of a unified ideology remained, as statues were torn down and erected,⁴⁹ and the languages and images of the national revival were brought back to represent the folk and provide the aesthetic framework for the building of the 'new world.' In the *Coasts of Bohemia*, historian Derek Sayer characterizes the institutional and cultural construction of a bounded Czech citizenry both during the national revival and in post 1948 communist Czechoslovakia as a fusion of romanticism and positivism, in which images of the gentle countryside and memories of childhood were seamlessly condensed into a single image of the Czech nation, a process he refers to as a historical and emotional exercise in geography.⁵⁰ In the 1970's, the countryside was primarily treated as a site of private retreat, a reflection of the inward retreat condoned by normalization policies.

Conclusion

In all of these cases, landscape is seen as an indivisible whole as well as a product of human agency, a consequence of the collective human transformation of nature reflecting dominant ideology⁵¹ The wilderness envisioned and enacted by the tramp is one that in some ways breaks up this whole by re-imagining and collectively enacting this re-imagined space. The relationship with landscape represented by the figure of the tramp is one defined in terms of a kind of cognitive and physical mobility; not simply in terms of a creative re-appropriation of place but in terms of movement between places; the tramp plays the role of the eternal wanderer,

⁴⁹Most famously the Stalin statue in Prague. This is cited in the chapter "Minus Stalin" in Vladimír Macura, Hana Pichová, and Craig S. Cravens. *The Mystifications of a Nation: "the Potato Bug" and Other Essays on Czech Culture*. Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.

⁵⁰Sayer, 194

⁵¹Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).

enacting a sort of inner exile, a self-imposed rootlessness. In the context of state socialism, tramping presented an alternative utopian vision by envisioning/creating new physical spaces but also presenting possibility of new imaginative spaces it worked against socialism's vision of the "new world as something unequivocally intended and determined."⁵² This is the case in the interwar period and against during its revival period.

When describing the origins of what some refer to as the first modern tramp song, *Slaboch Ben*, Kapitan Kid recalls this story: "we were sitting around a fire, discussing how people are always writing songs about heroes, and that we should write a song about someone no one wants to write a song about; let's write a song about "weak ben."⁵³ This demonstrates another aspect of tramping - the true "hero" of tramping, the figurative tramp being addressed in the second stanza of this song can actually be anyone. If there are any thematic differences between tramp songs of the interwar era and the songs of the 1960s; while tramping of the interwar era played with the idea of nation, presented an alternative way of building community, the tramp of the 1960s presented a different way of being entirely. The engagement with physical space, however, remains the same, and the potential for this way of being was already built into the idea of tramping. The 1960s tramp was in some ways using the space created by the interwar tramp to project a more real individual clearly articulated subject. The figure of the tramp takes a sort of existential turn in its "revival" period, which highlights a continuous development instead of a reemergence of the same phenomenon.

⁵²Macura, Vladimír. *Štantný věk (a jiné studie o socialistické kultuře)*. Praha: Academia, 2008. s 167.

⁵³Interview, Kapitan Kid. <http://www.trampsky-magazin.cz/blog/obrazky-z-dejin-naroda-trampskeho-po-druhe-svetove-valce-dil-1-176.html>.

Porta as Performance: Enacting and Embodying its Wilderness

The transformation of landscape is deeply tied not only to its textual representation but the way in which it was embodied, through the physical act of tramping. As mentioned earlier, tramps needed convincing to go to the first tramp festival, which was difficult at first because "if there wasn't a fire, a tramp wanted nothing to do with it."⁵⁴ Because tramps did nevertheless attend, Porta in these first years was in fact a "skutečně trampske" (an "actually tramp-like") event. The festivals functioned as ritual tramp gathering, beginning with the singing of the tramp anthem and the raising of tramp flags of all the settlements present. It became a expected that bands begin with "Kamaradi, Ahoj!" (Ahoj, Friends!)⁵⁵ to which the audience would reply in kind - "Ahoj!" and every appreciated tramp song was greeted with the ritual "Umi..!" (He/She Knows How!"⁵⁶). By 1970, Porta graced the cover of *Tramp* magazine, and extensive coverage of the event was detailed inside. Though initially conceived as a tramp and "country-western" festival, Porta was able to function to as a specifically "tramp" event due to the way in which tramping realized and materialized its imagined world, through a specific and consistent set of objects and rituals.

Tramping's Anthem

The flag flies high
to the joy of its children
at once it unites with the clouds
again it will wave, when youth forsakes us

⁵⁴Zdeněk Jelínek, Interview. *Legendy*, 300

⁵⁵A standard greeting in czech, "Ahoj" functions just like its English equivalent. The term was first used by tramps emulating British sailors, but quickly became a permanent linguistic fixture.

⁵⁶A more accurate translation might be "They can do it!"

In a short essay on the Czech national anthem, Czech cultural critic Vladimír Macura ponders its central question - Kde Domov Můj?, Where Is My Home - and finds the answer the song provides insufficient.⁵⁷ The question itself betrays an unattainability, an uncertainty that is only confirmed by the landscape presented in response. The vague paradisaical images of a blind man, Karel Tyl's "murmuring rivers", "rustling pinewoods" and "glorious gardens" could easily be anywhere else in the world. Macura bemoans this ambiguity, the lack of specific landscape that could manifest the Czech nation. This literary ambiguity is echoed by a certain ambiguity, or at least coincidence, of the song's origins. Originally a popular song, Kde Domov Můj is from one of Karel Tyl's "popular-ordinary" musicals, *Fidlovačka*. Essentially a vaudeville production, *Fidlovačka* is a nationalistic but lighthearted love story pitting Czech workers against the German bourgeoisie, and hugely popular, the song itself comes before the story's two protagonists are reconciled. Conceived initially as incidental music, Tyl did not want to include it in the final production, thinking that it was qualitatively inferior to the rest of the music in the show. It became the Czech anthem much later, in the 1920's, a period in which there was much confusion as to what the new republic's national anthem should be.⁵⁸

The tramp anthem, too, was composed incidentally in the late 1920s by tramp songwriter Jenda Korda; it was set to music with his brother František and his friend Vašek Skoupý, as the two were improvising around a campfire in the settlement Lone Star on the Kačák River, the same river that later rumbled like Prkno's Mississippi.⁵⁹ It quickly became a popular tramp song, partly because Jenda Korda was already a well-known musician and partly because Lone Star was in a very popular, and concentrated area of tramps, near Svatojánský proudy. It is featured

⁵⁷Vladimír Macura, "Where is my Home?" in *The Mystifications of a Nation*, 40

⁵⁸According to Nancy Wingfield some claimed that the song "Krasna Naše Domovino Andelským Nám Rájem Bud' was a more appropriate anthem. This translates roughly to "Oh Beautiful Homeland, be our Heavenly Paradise."

⁵⁹Jenda Korda. Interview by Dewi (Vaclav Černý), *Tramp* vol. 6, 1969.

on a 1929 recording of tramp songs performed by the popular tramp group Settleři in the popular operetta and 1933 film, *Dobrý tramp Bernášek (The Good Tramp Bernášek)*. When Bob Hurikán wrote his *History of Tramping* in 1939, "Vlajka Vzhůru Letí" was not yet an official tramp anthem and according to Waic and Kossl's *Czech Tramping*, this did not happen until after World War II. Memoirs indicate that inter-war tramps used Jarka Mottl's "V Záři Červánků" ("In the Sunset Glow") or "Kamarádi" (Friends), then Srdce Trampů (Heart of a Tramp) by Géza Včelička.⁶⁰ When the first tramp songbook *Trampská Romance* came out again in 1965, after decade of being banned, *Vlajka* was the very first song. Pavel Březina's 1965 documentary *Potlach* provides extensive footage of this song at the beginning of a ritual tramp gathering, as the flags of all the settlements present are being raised. To this day the song is sung at the beginning of ritual gatherings and marks only significant occasions; it officially inaugurated the first Porta in 1967, and every Porta after this.

The origins of *Vlajka* as the tramp anthem are referred to in terms similar to the origins of tramping itself. Somehow, the song just "came to be," "springing up from" the settlement Lone Star, or "appearing" around a campfire as Jenda and his brother were singing songs. It is a song that is in many ways quite ordinary, in many ways quite similar to the hundreds, even thousands, of tramp songs of this time, songs like *Až Tichnou Bílé Skály*, *Cariboo* or even the songs performed decades later in Ustí Nad Labem - *V Dali Za Horama*, or *Covboy z Čerokee*. It certainly contains several key elements of a classic tramp song - singing songs and laughing around a campfire, nostalgically remembering days past, referring to a paradise lost. Why was it this particular song, one that was associated with a lesser settlement and written by an author who perhaps uncomfortably moved in spheres of popular culture, that was "for all us tramps the

⁶⁰Honza a Blanka Reichardovi. "Svatojanské Proudý," *Časopis Skauting*, April 1991.

dearest?"⁶¹ The answer, I believe, is that in many ways the anthem refers a specific set of symbolic objects that are missing from Kde Domov Můj. *Vlajka* is particularly appropriate for a special occasion because it refers to a specific and consistent ritual of raising the flag and a specific set of symbolic objects.

Tramping's Rituals and Objects

The tramp's anthem refers not only to the flag itself, but to the raising of the tramp flag as an important ritual activity. The flag is raised at the beginning of a weekend, it is situated behind the campfire and beside the totem pole, at the beginning of each ritual tramp gathering, or potlach. A gathering of tramps from various settlements in a given area, Bob Hurikán describes these events as particularly rambunctious occasions - with games, performances, story-telling and singing around a campfire. These were some of the first documented tramp events; from the late 1920s and throughout the 1930's magazines such as *Tramp* would regularly list the settlements that had participated in a given potlach, as well as list some of its highlights. These gatherings were also the target of repression - their size and the planning required made them easier to track and disband. This was the case not only in the 1930s, beginning with the Kubat decrees, but was also true throughout the 1950s and 60s. While it was impossible to visually identify individual tramps in the cities,⁶² their relative mobility, small concentration, lack of permanently fixed settlements, and extensive topographical knowledge of a given area also made it difficult to locate tramps on typical weekend excursions. Tramps were thus often apprehended at the point of transition between the two, on the margins of the city, or when attending these

⁶¹"This song was for all of us the dearest" from the memoirs of Honza and Blanka Reichard. *Svatokanské Proudý - pohlednice a fotografie z let 1900-1945* (Rokycany: KC Solid, 2002), 60.

⁶²This is explained in several chapters of Zdeněk Bauers memoir: *Trafouš, páskové, Vyšehradští jezdci a jiné vzpomínky: dětství a mládí v Praze padesátých let.*, as well as in one installment of Kapitan Kids memoirs "Kapitan Kid - Obrázky Z Dějin Národa Trampského Po Druhé Světové Válce." either people did not wear tramping clothes until the weekends, or, beginning in the late 1950's, they were mixed in and functionally indecipherable from other young n'er-do-wells, particularly Vaclavske Namesti's adolescent loiterers, or Trafouři.

ritual gatherings, which were larger events that required easy-to-track prior planning.⁶³ In a memoir on tramping around Prague in the late 1950s, Zdeněk Bauer recalls being apprehended at train stations, bus stops and suburban restaurants and pubs; their jackets and backpacks were ripped and their guitars were confiscated and sometimes broken. While some of these tramps were arrested, a tramp by the name of "Wimpy" of the settlement T.O. Howgh was among many sent instead sent to do mandatory labor hauling coal in the mines or working in the fields. The most dramatic moment was in June of 1963, the so-called "bloody potlach," where authorities violently raided a gathering outside of Děčín, a town on the German border, northeast of Ústí nad Labem.⁶⁴

In June of 1964, a young film student at FAMU Pavel Březina, documented a potlach at the settlement Fort Adamson. The film depicts groups of tramps traveling to a designated spot not associated with any of the participating settlements, by hitchhiking, train or bus; once arrived, the flags of all the participating settlements are raised as the anthem is sung, while everyone rises and takes off their hat. This is followed by singing around the campfire, - each settlement takes a turn, very ceremoniously standing up and singing a song, some of which are old classics that everyone knows and sings along to while others are clearly new, specific, perhaps to an individual settlement or maybe even made up shortly before. At the end of a performance they all shout "Umí...!" or "he/she knows...!" a traditional response that Hurikan and other interwar tramps refer to as well. Thus, even around the fire, even in its 'natural

element, its ritual setting, the tramp song is a sort of performance, the campfire a performative

⁶³"Krvavý Potlach 1963 - NÁŠ TRAMP," <https://sites.google.com/site/nastramp/historie/krvavypotlach1963>; also in Antony, "Kubátuv Zákon," *Trampsky Magazine*, <http://www.trampsky-magazin.cz/blog/kubatuv-protitrampsky-zakon-109.html>.

⁶⁴Police used batons, cocked rifles and service dogs, several tramps were seriously injured, some were eventually arrested or sent to do mandatory labor, most were fined and all were made to walk the 25 km back to Decin. From tramp "Wimpy" of the settlement T.O. Howgh's memoirs, it is a story that is verified through the experiences of many other tramps as well. Wimpy's account is reproduced here in "Krvavý Potlach 1963 - NÁŠ TRAMP," <https://sites.google.com/site/nastramp/historie/krvavypotlach1963>.

space, both of which were also enacted at the Porta festivals.

The tramps' use of flags, and the specific use of outdoor and western imagery is a remnant and playful deviation from the use of emblems in the scouting movement, an extension of the tramp's engagement with the symbolic transformation of the physical landscape during the interwar period. Czech scouting was influenced both by Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of British scouting, but also by Ernest Thomas Seton's woodcraft philosophy, compounding the romance, poeticism and love for nature of Seton's back to nature environmental ethos and anti-industrialist, anti-modernist primitivism with the order, discipline and organization of Baden-Powell's scouting British scouting organizations.⁶⁵ Czech scouting, thus already incorporated, by virtue of Seton's influence - some of the native american imagery used by tramps as well as provided some of its basic tenants: the protection of nature, modest lifestyles, the figure of the American Indian as a sort of moral hero, and a focus on rituals and emblems. Tramping, however, expanded on these emblems and ritual, using them as the basis for the establishment and performance of parallel communities. Every tramp settlement was designated by a particular emblem and a particular flag. This symbol was usually inspired by those associated with the American West, and often corresponded to the settlement's physical environment - bears, trees, waterfalls, cliffs etc. Each emblem was embroidered both on settlement flag and, after World War II, worn on patches sewn on the the left sleeve of a jacket, or pendants worn around the neck. Regardless of the symbol, it is usually enshrined in a white oval with two bull's horns; originally the badge for Seton's Woodcraft League and according to whom it is an "ancient Indian totem..the horns meaning "attack" and the shield "defense"; the idea symbolized being,

⁶⁵Petr Jehlička and Matthew Kurtz, "Everyday resistance in the Czech landscape: the woodcraft culture from the Hapsburg Empire to the communist regime," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* (February 2013), 308–332.

"trained and ready."⁶⁶ According to tramp and historian Pavel Vinklát, the badge's circle signifies "immortality and the purity of body and mind" while the horns and the blue sky represent "strength of body and soul."⁶⁷ Maps of settlements are marked by these symbols, with the settlement emblem inside, while important landmarks are marked with totem poles and areas restricted or occupied by "chatáři," a pejorative term used by by tramps to refer to their cottage-dwelling co-inhabitants in the countryside, are often marked with an 'x.'

If the symbol of the tramps environment is a wild, uncultivated uninhabited landscape, the tramp community, and a sense of a tramping home, is represented by these objects. These objects not only designated tramp materials and texts - songbooks, for instance, were full of these images, as were tramping magazines - but also marked the tramp's physical space. The flag, totem pole, and campfire all designate the space occupied by the tramp; in the context of the anthem, the campfire and the sound of voices are introduced before the tramps themselves.

Everything sinks into dreams, and everywhere life is quiet
only down in the darkness, around a fire, can you can hear laughter

The Porta festival's "logo" is actually in the shape of a tramp flag and the stage for the first festival was set up such that all of the settlements flags were hanging up, as is customary for a ritual gathering. What is striking about this image is the sheer number of flags, almost dizzyingly many and similar; *Vlajka*, as an anthem, is interesting in that it is not referring to a specific flag, it is referring, quite literally, to thousands of flags. The flag as a marker of a specific settlement becomes much less important than the flag as one of many material indicators of tramping, along with embroidered belts, totem poles, even native american head-dresses. Despite the sort of flexibility, the fluidity, of tramping as an aesthetic, these objects, and the attachment to these objects is a critical component of its consistency. It is a means also of marking place,

⁶⁶Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Book of Woodcraft*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Pub. Co, 1921).

⁶⁷Vinklát, *Kronika trampingu v Jizerních horách - 1934 - 2004*. (Liberec: Knihy 555, 2004).

designating spaces as tramp even outside of spaces that are usually designate the tramp.

Tramping, as a performance deeply tied to its physical environment, literally to its campfire, through these objects can move outside of this space; it becomes more than an activity but a very distinct and mobile aesthetic.

Journeys Through Darkness and a Sense of Play

The singing of the first anthem inaugurated the 'resurrection' of the settlement Rykatádo, along with the recreation of its interwar emblem and flag, reconstructed in this case on a grand scale, nearly three times as large as a typical tramp settlement's flag.⁶⁸In a song written by Bob Hurikán in 1933 about the settlement, the sandstone landscapes of the Bohemian Massif become wild and contested prairies and steppes just north of the Mexican border, where the boys of Rykatádo drink gin and boisterously sing songs into the quiet night:

Rykatádo, like a tornado, flies through the vast steppes
horses neigh and boys holler, good luck sticks to them like glue
Rykatádo waves its sombrero in the air, reveling in its good spirits..

But when the bar gets ugly, the Rykatádo prairie boys are beasts,
Here there pistols screech, a cheater falls, and feathers fly from the couch
When grog, whiskey and gin have made them merry, they slap their stomachs
and all of Rykatádo sings into the night

30 years later, it was a site of a famous yearly pilgrimage to the settlement Island in the Jizera mountains, an excursion organized by Kapitán Kid for area tramps, including many figures associated with the resurrection of Rykatádo and the first Porta festivals, including Wabi and Miki Ryvola.⁶⁹ Despite Island's proximity to the town of Liberec it was in some sense truly uncharted territory, one Bohemia's northernmost settlements; before exploring the area and

⁶⁸Vinklát, 204.

⁶⁹Originally from outside Prague, the brothers started writing songs during tramping excursions to the settlement "Zlatý Klíč"(Golden Key). Miki was also an author; his short stories were published in Tramp magazine, which was re-instituted in 1964 and his poems were incorporated into the narrative of the short documentary Potlach, directed by Pavel Březina in 1965. He also published *Trampské Anekdoty*, a collection of anecdotes, jokes, proverbs and comic illustrations taken from newspapers and tramping magazines from the first publication of such texts in 1919.

founding the settlement Island, Kapitán Kid describes his image of the region as "just as fantastical as Herodotus' image of the waters of the Nile."⁷⁰ For most tramps not familiar with the particular corner of Liberec, it was still uncharted territory. Considered an unnecessary luxury, tramps did not use ordinary tourist maps; the only 'actual' map was drafted by tramps of that area, which was illegible and full of names like Geissler's death, Devil's Hole, Hell's Pool and Wild Mary.⁷¹ The journey began in the evening in Liberec, because everyone still had to work on Saturday, and through the night. They travelled according to a route that was carefully planned to be circuitous and meandering, so that combined with darkness and the Jizera's fog it was impossible for anyone to see where they were going.⁷² According to Kapitan Kid, it was a "a tough journey..so we didn't get bored, we grew fond of a route that took us around the forest swimming hole, around the quarry and Millner's cross down to Rudolf street and from there along "power plant street" - we lead [them] through all of that in the cold, moonless night."⁷³ The next day the exhausted travelers would walk along an easy and clearly marked hiking path back home, returning in less than an hour. The excursion was immortalized in an 'epic' humorous poem by Wabi and Miki Ryvola, which won the first authors prize at the 1968 Porta. It was later put to music and sung around campfires as *Trail to Island (Cesta na Island)*. In six stanzas the story describes a horrific, mythical journey to a 'paradise,' described by a stranger who promised to "eat a coyotes raw ear" if they did not find it at the end of their journey through this "corner of death:"

Through damnable heat, we pulled through the forest

⁷⁰Kapitán Kid, Interview by Jindrich Šrejber, <http://www.denik.cz/hudba/jindrich-srejber-kapitan-kid20120224.html>

⁷¹Wabi Ryvola, *Trail to Island*

⁷²Wabi Ryvola, excerpt from "Trail to Island," *Vínklát*, 112.

⁷³Kapitan Kid, Interview, <http://www.denik.cz/hudba/jindrich-srejber-kapitan-kid20120224.html>

stinking of fetid pools and gingery moss
and the trees, like grass, would fall when you touched them,
they'd crash to the ground, and do you in

Then came the hills and the boulders of fury
we lost our tongues, without water went on
so we sucked all the juices from the bark of trees
while Island's old devil laughed from the clouds.

This entry stands in stark contrast to the tramps journey in *Hejno Vran, Poslední Mile*, or *V Dáli Za Horama*. While these songs evoke a deeply romantic longing and a very earnest devotion to nature, *Cesta na Island* is self-conscious and humorous, a spirit which is mirrored also in Hurikán's drunken gunslingers of Rykatádo and the blank shots fired in the air at the first Porta. Although the resurrection of Rykatádo was certainly marked by sober spirit of commemoration and respect for a previous generation of tramps, it was also lighthearted, almost irreverent at times. This was true especially among the younger generation; one young participant described having "little more irreverent [recesivný] stance towards tramping." For example, the usual sheriff, which had by 1967 lost the so palpable in Hurikan's text due to its perseverance, its association with the already mythologized interwar tramp, the new 'settlers' of Rykatádo decided to elect two representative figures - a queen and a magician.⁷⁴

The activity of tramping consisted of the re-invention of spaces but also the creation of parallel communities that were highly ritualized, governed by a very serious set of codes and framed by a clearly defined ethic, all of which was simultaneously tied to a sense of irony and a sprit of play. While the figure of the Native American carried a certain weight among tramps, and was in many ways very 'serious' and insular, it was also self-conscious and acknowledged as something that was also visible to the public, and visible to figures of authority.

Th tramp's 'mobile aesthetic,' for instance, took the form of a car that Wabi Ryvola and Václav Černý, or "Dewi" from the settlement TO Tramp Boys outside Prague, used to drive around in in

⁷⁴Vinklát, 112.

the early 1960s: "Me and Wabi used to ride around Kladno in this "Mean Machine"⁷⁵ which the entire city recognized. A large Indian head was painted across the whole door - in the early 1960s this was pretty audacious! The police had a heart attack, but they were never able to stop us."⁷⁶ Trappings objects thus had a sort of double effect, one as a means of producing a parallel community, a means of performing an alternative imagined world, but also a way of poking fun at mainstream Socialist (and in the interwar period Nationalist) society and values. If the romantic wilderness envisioned by the tramp engages with depictions of the countryside during the National Revival, the self-consciousness, humor and irony that was necessarily a part of tramp rituals and ritual objects reflect the revival's own form of self consciousness, its elements of pretense, illusion and humor, at the same time "both playful and deadly earnest." Tramping as an activity, as a performance and a set of rituals, expresses this duality.

Diffusion, Coherence and a Conclusion

The difference between the Porta festivals in the late 1960s and a ritual tramp potlach was primarily one of scope. While most potlachs were based on a given set of settlements in a given region, Porta included tramp bands from Moravia and Slovakia as well. This was an unprecedented type of event in the history of tramping; before the first Porta in 1967, the largest gathering of tramps in one area was a gathering of tramps in Prague in 1931 protesting the Kubát Act. While the fact that these tramps came to the festival speaks to a certain amount of networking and organization, due primarily to its leading figures and cultural representatives, it also showcases a certain amount of isolation, or the radical 'localness' of tramping and tramp settlements. While tramping is based on travel, on movement, on an unrestricted and

⁷⁵He uses "Drzá Oktávka," referring to a cheap car very popular in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. Drzý is an adjective used very commonly in Czech and often depends on context. Generally, it evokes a spirit anywhere from playful irreverence and sass, to audacity and disrespect.

⁷⁶Václav Černý. "Rozhovor s šerifem T.O. Tramp Boys zvaným Dewi." <http://www.folktime.cz/z-luhu-a-haju/7281-rozhovor-s-serifem-t-o-tramp-boys-zvanym-dewi.html>.

unprohibited experience of the outdoors, this movement is very much circumscribed within a given area. Tramping, as we have seen was a very local phenomenon and in some ways an isolated one. While songs and stories consolidated the idea of tramping, and served as sort of community building texts, there seems to be very little personal contact among the great majority of tramps. Even potlachs occurred very infrequently, and involved only a few settlements from a given area, usually no more than twenty. It is for this reason that histories of tramping are often organized in terms of geography.

When *Tramp* magazine was re-issued in 1968, its inaugural editorial - its "perfunctory introductory statement" - recognized this tension, addressing specifically an audience that had an issue with tramping being represented by a "celostátní," or nationwide, magazine, despite being printed in and associated with the settlements around Ostrava: "its not so bad to know what our neighbors are doing and learn from that. All fellow workers are welcomed. They decisive factor will be if they *know*,"⁷⁷ referring to the "umi!" that follows a well-received tramp song. The decisive factor being, of course, that there is something uniting all tramps, that tramping is in fact a consolidated nationwide community that can and even *should* be addressed as a whole. While paying specific attention to the area around Ostrava, *Tramp* reported events and published contributions from all over Czechoslovakia as well, specifically in the section "News from the Settlements (Zprávy z Osad)" and continued to do so until it was banned in 1970. One of its final issues, in fact, in June of 1970, was graced by a photo from another "celostátní" event. The 1970 Porta was the last to be held in Ustí Nad Labem and the first time that the festival was mentioned in *Tramp* magazine.

While certain ritual tramping objects remain remarkably consistent over time and space, this does not necessarily speak to a fundamentally consolidated community of tramps. Instead it

⁷⁷*Tramp* volume 1, April 1968.

points to a fundamental tension within tramping, especially during its revival in the 1960's, a period that attempts to create a history of tramps as well as a tramp subject and a collective body of tramps, while at the same time resisting its consolidation, its definition, its organization.

There is no real contradiction in this tension, however, because of the fluidity, the fundamental mobility, of tramping as a category. Tramping could be inward looking, private and personal but could also consider itself part of a larger community of tramps. In all both cases, tramping projects onto the Czech countryside its own imagination, re-envisioning landscapes, then embodying and substantiating this vision. While the Czech anthem ambiguously finds its home in an imagined countryside, the tramp anthem very explicitly finds its home adrift in the experience of this countryside, lost in time.

Vše tone v snách a život kolem ztich
jen dole v tmách kol ohně slyšet smích.
Tam srdce všem jen spokojeně zabuší
z písniček známých vše jistě vyтуší.

Vlajka vzhůru letí,
k radosti svých dětí,
hned se s mraky snoubí
vlát bude zas až mladí čas opustí nás.

Po letech sám až zabloudíš v ten kraj
a staneš tam, kde býval kdys tvůj ráj
vzpomeneš chvil těch, kteréš míval tolik rád -
tak jako kdysi ozvěnou slyšíš hrát

*Everything sinks into dreams, and everywhere
life is quiet
only down in the darkness, around a fire, can
you can hear laughter
there the hearts of all are happily beating
with familiar songs they so verily feel*

*The flag flies high
to the joy of its children
at once it unites with the clouds
again it will wave, when youth forsakes us*

*After years alone, when you've lost yourself in
that country
you'll stand up there, where your paradise once
was
For a moment you'll remember those you loved
so well
And as before, you'll hear the echoes of a song*

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