

This qualitative study strives to capture the strategies and motivations for emigration of Czechoslovak citizens to former West Berlin between the years 1948 and 1989, describing it from emigrants' perspective. The main focus of the study is an analysis of emigration incentives and strategies utilized by the then Czechoslovak citizens, currently living in Berlin. The theoretical base for the study consists of the theory of collective historical memory, the problem of secondary and tertiary socialization, the (mal)adaptation to new host environments and the biographical approach to emigration studies. The incentives and strategies of political emigration are analyzed within the context of the political and social development between the years 1946 and 1989. The study is chronologically organized according to the following historical periods and political events: (1) the takeover of power by communists in 1946-1948, (2) the political persecutions of the 1950s, (3) the liberalization of the communist regime during the 1960s, (4) the events of Prague Spring in 1968, (5) the military intervention of the Warsaw Treaty countries on 21. August 1968, (6) the consolidation era, (7) the Czechoslovak citizens' mass emigration between the years 1968 and 1970, (8) the Czechoslovak citizens' mass emigration of the 1970s and of the 1980s in the normalization era. In this study, the historical facts and figures are supplemented by the ethnographic testimony of Czech emigrants.