
24th WORLD CONGRESS OF SVU

**Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the
Foundation of the**

CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIETY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**will take place between the 8th and 14th of
September 2008
at the**

**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
Ruzomberok, Slovakia**

**Co-Sponsors of the congress are:
The Catholic University (Rector Prof. Dr. Boris Banary)
and
The City of Ruzomberok (Mayor Ing. Michal Slastan)**

**Please Save the Dates
for this Festive Event in the
Beautiful Slovak Mountains!!**

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 2007 SVU Conference in Bethlehem was a success. Society of Arts and Sciences paid tribute to the 550th anniversary of Jednota bratrská by a conference at Moravian College pointing to contributions of the Moravian Brethren to America. Conference was well attended and brought together scholars from the U.S. and Canada with a number of scientists and students from Czech and Slovak Republics. I am most happy that next to prominent senior historians and politologists from the Czech Republic, we had a number of contributions by young educators and students. It is there where the future of our Society will be. I want to thank all of them for coming and introducing us to the topics of their research and studies.

Next year will bring a number of important anniversaries. Foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Munich tragedy and change to Czecho-Slovakia in 1938, the Communist takeover in 1948 and the Soviet occupation in 1968. The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, founded in 1958 will celebrate its 50th birthday. We will honor it at the 24th World Congress in Ružomberok, Slovakia in September 2008. SVU was founded as a platform for Czech and Slovak scholars and artists to meet and to preserve Czech and Slovak cultural tradition in the free world. Among its founders were prominent members of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia, the first united political organization of European exiles from countries under Soviet domination. Many of our active members today were in the leadership of the Council during the last 15 years of the cold war. They participated in fight for human rights in Czechoslovakia and thus contributed to the defeat of Communism. Today, their efforts may not be adequately appreciated but should never be forgotten.

The Czech and Slovak culture and science has a long tradition and has nothing to apologize for. A prominent Czech educator and a world class pedagogue Václav Příhoda (who was married to Melissa Clark of the “Mayflower Society”) told me many years ago of today “politically incorrect” studies in Chicago public schools in the 1920’s. “Czechoslovaks” (understand the Czechs and the Slovaks) were beaten only by the Swedes as far as their I.Q.’s and academic prowess were concerned. Modern age exiles in America made significant contributions to science and culture in the United States and Canada. An SVU publication *Educators with Czechoslovak Roots a U.S. - Canadian Faculty Roster* (edited by Mila Rechčígl in 1980) speaks for itself.

It is important to cherish and maintain tradition of the Czech and Slovak culture in the world. Contributions in music, literature and movie making are generally well known. Contributions in science and medicine less so. We should remember that *Pneumocystis*, a parasite which complicates lives of cancer and AIDS patients, was identified as a human pathogen by Czech scientists, as was the immunological tolerance. Eradication of smallpox, the historic scourge of mankind, the greatest ever accomplishment of the United Nations, was made possible by a Czech doctor who persuaded the World Health Organization and Johnson’s White house that smallpox eradication was possible and developed the new eradication program. More than two dozen Czech and Slovak epidemiologists played a key role in it. Regretfully, because of the ignorant and vengeful politics of the normalization regime in Czechoslovakia after 1968, their role was never fully acknowledged, and the credit went to Americans. The best medicines available to today for treatment of AIDS were synthesized by a Czech chemist in Prague. Studies of Czech physical chemists on correlation problems in quantum chemistry or of highly reactive large molecules are unique in the world. The greatest ever philanthropic donation to American university was recently made by a Slovak physician and scientist in New York. This is only a brief summary of some of the most significant contributions of the last 50 years.

The critical evaluation of the third Czechoslovak exile is only beginning. It is encouraging that Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic decided to seriously address the work of exiles “from the Academy”. We, who belong to this group, hope that they are serious.

The next year’s 50th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences calls for a most deserved and ornate celebration. I urge all of you to come to Ružomberok to remember and celebrate contributions of Czech and Slovak scholars and artists worldwide.

Today there are thousands of Czech and Slovak young intellectuals and students working throughout the world. We meet them in North American, in Western Europe, in Japan or in Australia. They are fluent in English, proud and not different from all the others. It is our duty to introduce them to SVU and to recruit them to join us. It is only the young generation of Czechs and Slovaks who can keep our Society growing and flourishing. Although we do not subscribe to the change of the “melting pot” of the New World to the “salad bowl”, maintaining the Czech and Slovak cultural tradition alive in the era of globalization should be a goal of our Society. We can only be proud of our past 50 years.

Next year we shall all meet in Ružomberok!

Karel Raska, Jr.