

# KOSMAS



New Series Vol. 1 N° 2

by the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences







# KOSMAS

CZECHOSLOVAK  
AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN  
JOURNAL

**KOSMAS** ISSN 1056-005X

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*Kosmas: Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*

(Formerly *Kosmas: Journal of Czechoslovak and Central European Studies*, Vols. 1-7, 1982-1988, and *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, Vols. 8-11, (1989-1993).

*Kosmas* is a peer reviewed, multidisciplinary journal that focuses on Czech, Slovak and Central European Studies. It publishes scholarly articles, memoirs, research materials, and *belles-lettres* (including translations and original works), dealing with the region and its inhabitants, including their communities abroad. It is published twice a year by the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU).

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## From the Editor

Hugh L. Agnew

The year 2018 was marked in various parts of the world, including Central and Eastern Europe, by anniversary celebrations of various events, most significantly the 1918-2018 centenary of the ending (supposedly) of World War I. For the Czechs and Slovaks, the one hundredth anniversary was by no means the only “round” anniversary that was marked: looking back into the past there were 1618, 1648, 1848, 1938, 1948, and of course 1968. There were even remembrances of 1988, the first legally authorized demonstration in communist-run Czechoslovakia in many years and in some way a harbinger of the great changes of 1989.

This volume reflects that interest in “round anniversaries” and the related issues of remembrance and commemoration that anniversary celebrations bring with them. We open this issue, New Series, Volume 1, number 2, with an article by frequent *Kosmas* contributor Zdeněk David, in which he explores Masaryk’s ideas on “globalization” during the wartime and postwar years, revolving around the major 1918 pivot. James W. Peterson considers the twofold remembrances of 1918 anniversaries, the declaration of Czechoslovak independence on October 28, 1918, and the coming into effect of the armistice on the Western Front on November 11, 1918 of the same year. He explores the ways in which these two anniversaries were evoked and remembered in the arts, especially music and poetry, in the years succeeding 1918, ending with some consideration of their contemporary commemoration.

We move to a different set of remembrances with the article by Jana Pátková, exploring the themes of the Holocaust (*Shoah* in Hebrew, *Porajmos* in Romani) in Slovak literature. She shows the ways in which these themes have emerged out of relative silence in postwar Slovak literature to a new appreciation in works appearing since the change of regime and Slovak independence. World War II remembrance among the Czechs, including the Holocaust, but also involving related matters such as the Heydrichiáda or the grim history of the Petschek Palace, provides the subject of an essay by Ben Fox. Finally, the 1968 anniversary gives the context for the article by Marty Manor Mullins on the reactions of workers in East Slovakia’s Košice to the Warsaw Pact invasion that ended the experiment in “Socialism with a human face.” Using previously untapped archival material and including some never-before published photos, Mullins provides a fascinating look at the reform movement seen from the periphery. The same theme, 1968, from the perspective of the Czech and Slovak émigré community (along with other Americans of Czech and Slovak descent) is the subject of Mary Hrabík Šámal’s article on the actions of Cleveland’s Czech and Slovak communities in response to the Soviet-led invasion of their homeland. In it she draws on the private papers of Martin Hrabík, portions of whose memoirs were published in the previous volume of *Kosmas*.

In addition to the articles and essay, Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr., continues his compilation of genealogical research reference materials, this time with an exploration of the Nobel Prize winners (and some who did not win) who were of Czech or Slovak origin or had other ties to the Czech and Slovak territories. This

issue also brings reviews of four recent books, two of which also directly deal with the issues of memory and remembrance. One of these is the memoir of Milan J. Kubic, reviewed by Miloslav Rechcigl, and one another account of her life experiences by Heda Margolius Kovály, supplementing her earlier *Under a Cruel Star*, reviewed by Mary Hrabík Šámal. Martin Nekola's concise introduction to Czech Chicago is reviewed by David Chroust, and finally Daniel Miller's exploration of the influence of former president Václav Klaus on Czech attitudes to Europe is reviewed by Carol Skalnik Leff.

Meanwhile, the first number of New Series, Volume 2, is being prepared, and it will maintain the "round anniversary" theme, with its contents devoted to papers from a conference sponsored by the Wilsonian Club of Washington, DC and the Washington, DC branch of the SVU last spring marking the centennial of the ending of World War I. Please make a note to watch for what promises to be a rich and provocative collection of presentations!

## ARTICLES

### Masaryk's Philosophical and Political Globalism

Zdeněk V. David

Masaryk embraced the vision of a united mankind from early in his career as a philosopher. He based the idea of global unity on the philosophical concept of a single humanity, as also exemplified by the Czech national tradition, which derived from the Bohemian Reformation. He saw an encouraging quantum leap toward world unification in the revolution of the massive spread of democracy that resulted from World War I.

### Genesis of Cultural and Political Cosmopolitanism

Masaryk's cultural cosmopolitanism had its roots in the ancient classics. Jaroslav Opat traced the origins to Masaryk's special interest in Plato (see also Chapter 5). His doctoral dissertation of 1875 was on "*Das Werden der Seele bei Plato*" (The Being of the Soul in Plato), soon followed by a study of "Plato as a Patriot."<sup>1</sup> Masaryk outlined his belief in the coming unification of mankind in 1877 in his article "O pokroku, vývoji a osvětě" [On Progress, Development, and Enlightenment].<sup>2</sup> The concept of the general progress of humanity began its evolution thanks to the rise of Christianity, which taught that all people form a single whole without distinction of nationalities, and that all human beings are brethren. According to young Masaryk, the idea of cosmopolitanism, and with it, the idea of progress of the entirety of mankind, could only evolve gradually. Yet Christianity, being cosmopolitan, greatly contributed to the rapprochement of nations, and the concept of the unity of humanity eventually did appear. At the next stage of the eighteenth century, the idea of progress came to mean a general perfecting of humankind. This concept flourished, especially in France.<sup>3</sup> Finally, even if it could not be established that all mankind had descended from a single parental couple, or that all mankind stems from the same family tree, it was evident that all human beings were equal and there were no superior or inferior races.<sup>4</sup> As he wrote to his future wife Charlotte on December 10, 1877, he was inspired by Comte's proposal to regenerate society through a secularized Catholicism, an organization which would supervise the application of moral laws, and the unity of the moral authority would be accompanied "by a unity in the government of the

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<sup>1</sup> In 1928 writing to Hugo Fischer concerning the origin of European thought, Masaryk stressed the role of the universal Roman Empire. Jaroslav Opat, "Masarykovo evropanství jako pojem a jako politický program," *Masarykův sborník* 8 (1993, Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 1993), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, "O pokroku, vývoji a osvětě," in Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Juvenalíe: studie a stati, 1876-1881*, Spisy, 16 (Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 1993), 48-67.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 50, 56.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

world.”<sup>5</sup> By the mid-1890s, Masaryk was becoming more critical of specific features of Comte’s prediction of future “positive” culture, yet he did not doubt the idea of an eventual global cultural unification. He disagreed with Comte’s idea that the culture of the future would consist of a particular combination of the characteristics of the elite nations: France would contribute its skill in philosophy and politics; England its penchant for reality and utility; Germany for consistent generalization; Italy the esthetic element; and Spain a sense for the worth of the individual and for common brotherhood. Masaryk maintained that the future culture could not be just a combination of diverse ingredients but, instead, it had to be an integral synthesis rooted in a common base.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from the universal trends pointing to the eventual unity of humanity, Masaryk discerned a special current in that direction in the Czech religious tradition, stemming from the Bohemian Reformation. A commitment to the Ideal of Humanity could be found in the teachings of Jan Hus, Petr Chelčický and—specifically—the Unity of Brethren. The Czech National Awakening appeared to Masaryk to be a continuation of the ideology of the Bohemian Reformation after a disruption was caused by the Counter Reformation (1622-1781).<sup>7</sup> Masaryk sought in particular to highlight the role of the Unity, because to him, the teaching and the practices of the Brethren were an example par excellence of the striving towards the realization of the universal Ideal of Humanity. Here Masaryk clung to his vision of the extraordinary role of the Bohemian Reformation in European and world history. In tracking the worldwide intellectual contribution of the Unity, he pointed out the route by which its Ideal of Humanity traveled from Bohemia and Moravia further into Europe. Through the exiled members of the Unity and under the leadership of Bishop, Jan Amos Komenský (1592-1670), their teaching spread first of all in the Protestant Germany. From there, through the iconic philosophers, Leibniz and Herder, the Brethren’s ideas became an important ingredient of the healthy Enlightenment of Germany and England. Already before World War I, Masaryk tended to contrast this type of Enlightenment with the French or Voltairean variant, which he considered objectionable, because of its anti-religious character. In sum, according to Masaryk, the positive type of cosmopolitan Enlightenment, particularly in Germany, was in fact an extension of the sound and authentic spirit of the Bohemian Reformation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cited by Stanislav Polák, *T.G. Masaryk: Za ideálem a pravdou*, vol. 1: 1850-1882 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2001), 428n21.

<sup>6</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Moderní člověk a náboženství*, Spisy, 8 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2000), 65-66.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Milan Hauner, “The Meaning of Czech History: Masaryk versus Pekař,” in *T. G. Masaryk, 1850-1937*, Stanley Winters and others eds., 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1989-1990), 3:27-28.

<sup>8</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Česká otázka. Naše nynější krize. Jan Hus*, Spisy 6 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2000), 15.

## Eurocentric Intermezzo, 1914-1918

Nevertheless, the course of World War I and its immediate aftermath brought on, in Masaryk's public pronouncements, a temporary shift to a stress specifically on Europe's—rather than global—integration. However, this narrowing of the horizon from the world as a whole merely to Europe represented only a transient diversion—to stave off the charges of the “Balkanization” of Europe—rather than a real change in his ultimate vision that continued to embrace cultural and political unification of the entire world. The temporary narrowing of Masaryk's international vision from the cosmos to Europe derived from his preoccupation with the territorial and ideological transformation of Central Europe. In particular, the narrower focus was reflected in his articles in the journal *New Europe*, published in London in 1916 and 1917, before his departure from London to Russia. In its pages, he stressed that Europe's regeneration after World War I “must be as much moral and spiritual as political.” This, in turn, could only be carried out on a purely democratic basis, the foremost demand of which was “true equality—alike in the inward and outward sphere—an equality which extends to every citizen and to every nation.”<sup>9</sup> In this context, Masaryk polemicized with the Hungarian proponent of a united Europe, Alfred H. Fried (1864-1921), in a review of Fried's book, *Restoration of Europe* (New York, 1916), in *New Europe* in early 1917. He considered Fried's analysis superficial, because the author judged all the contending countries to be equally guilty in the outbreak of the war.

According to Masaryk, Fried's accusation of the misuse of modern diplomacy and sovereignty really should only be directed against the countries partaking in the monarchist system. Masaryk likewise did not agree in contrasting Europe with the United States, which, according to Fried, had developed a high degree of economic abundance because it had avoided the European arms race.<sup>10</sup> These strictures foreshadowed Masaryk's future problem with Coudenhove-Kalergi, who would borrow ideas, including the term *PanEuropa*, from Fried.<sup>11</sup> Masaryk expressed his views on the organization of Europe more systematically in his book *New Europe*,

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<sup>9</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, “‘Sub specie aeternatis’,” *The New Europe*, 1.10 (December 31, 1916), 305; also as “‘Sub specie aeternatis’,” Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Válka a revoluce: články, memoranda, přednášky, rozhovory, 1914-1916*, Spisy, 30 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2005), 315-318.

<sup>10</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, “Herr Fried's Latest Book,” *The New Europe*, 2.19 (February 22, 1917), 248-49; also in Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Válka a revoluce II: články, memoranda, přednášky, rozhovory, 1917*, Spisy, 31 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2008), 54-55. Fried was a founding member of the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft* in 1892 and editor of its journal *Friedens Warte* since 1899. He had received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1911 for envisaging a Pan-European Office (*das Paneuropäische Bureau*), which would avert the movement toward a war. Franck Théry, *Construire l'Europe dans les années vingt, l'action d l'Union paneuropéenne sur la scène franco-allemande, 1924-1932* (Geneva: l'Institut européen de l'université de Genève, 1998), 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Fried also had written a book devoted to Pan-America in 1911; Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Aus meinem Leben* (Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1949), 85.

much of which he had written while traversing Russia on the Trans-Siberian railroad in the spring of 1918. The basic principle of organization was the self-determination of nations based on culture and history.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the unification of Europe would be accompanied by a synthesis “of all cultural elements and components, elaborated by all nations” as a background for the spread of democracy. Masaryk pointed to his own experience of having studied German positive cultural figures, such as Lessing and Goethe, and French and Anglo-Saxon culture, in addition to learning much from Russians, Poles, and South Slavs, and having knowledge of Italian and Scandinavian authors.<sup>13</sup>

More concretely, during his stay in the United States in 1918, Masaryk maintained contact with exile representatives of various European nations, mainly from Central Europe. He established the Mid-European Democratic Union, to which he was elected President, and secured the collaboration of the professor of sociology, Herbert Adolphus Miller of Oberlin College (1875-1951).<sup>14</sup> The Union’s efforts culminated in a meeting in Philadelphia’s Independence Hall on October 23-26, 1918. Altogether, eleven nations were represented in Philadelphia, although the Poles left the Union due to a disagreement with the Ukrainians. Professor Miller antagonized the United States government, and there was a danger that the State Department might repudiate the Union.<sup>15</sup> The crisis had developed on October 3, 1918 around a luncheon in honor of the Union, at which William A. Phillips, United States Assistant Secretary of State, was to deliver the keynote speech. The event was derailed by a protest of the Italian Ambassador in Washington, Vincenzo Macchi di Cellere (1866-1919), who charged that the Union was a Slavic conspiracy to deprive Italy of annexations in the Balkan Peninsula that were promised by the Treaty of London (1915). This intervention caused the State Department to adopt a reserved attitude toward the Mid-European Democratic Union.<sup>16</sup>

In the end, Masaryk salvaged the situation by changing the emphasis from the formation of an inter-state union to a forum for bilateral discussion, aimed at minimizing territorial and other conflicts among the central European nations. The Union was also to be an answer to those who feared that the destruction of the

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<sup>12</sup> The book appeared in French and English in 1918, in Czech in 1920, and in German in 1922. Alain Soubigou, *Thomas Masaryk* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2002), 421-22.

<sup>13</sup> Citing from Masaryk’s *Nová Evropa* (Prague, 1920), Opat, “Masarykovo evropanství jako pojem a jako politický program,” *Masarykův sborník* 8, 41-42.

<sup>14</sup> On Herbert A. Miller see also idem, “What Woodrow Wilson and America Meant to Czechoslovakia,” in Robert J. Kerner, ed., *Czechoslovakia*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1945, 71-87; Negley K. Teeters, “Herbert Adolphus Miller, 1875-1951,” *American Sociological Review* 16 (1951), 563-64.

<sup>15</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, Spisy 15 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2005), 197-98.

<sup>16</sup> Only out of respect for Masaryk, the State Department was represented by Richard Crane. To avoid offending di Cellere, most European diplomats boycotted the luncheon. Arthur May, “H. A. Miller and the Mid-European Union of 1918,” *American Slavic and East European Review*, 16 (1957), 480-481.

Habsburg monarchy would usher in the “Balkanization” of the region. Masaryk wished the Union to prepare proposals for a settlement in central Europe along the lines of his writings on the New Europe. This approach corresponded to the interest of Colonel Edward M. House, who was in charge of President Woodrow Wilson's brain trust to prepare for the peace negotiations.<sup>17</sup> The “Declaration of the Common Aims of the Central European Nations,” announced in Philadelphia on October 26, 1918, essentially repeated the basic principles of democracy upon which future unification should be based. These basic tenets were likewise contained in the “Declaration of the Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation,” authored by Masaryk in Washington, D.C. on October 18, 1918. The concluding principle was specifically advocated by President Wilson: it called for the creation of a League of Nations binding all countries to an effective cooperation to assure justice, and hence also peace, among nations.<sup>18</sup>

In a book published in 1930, the German historian Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau claimed that Masaryk took advantage of Wilson's unfamiliarity with European affairs and kept him in ignorance about the large number of Germans in Bohemia and Moravia, allowing their inclusion in Czechoslovakia in violation of the principle of self-determination.<sup>19</sup> This charge was strengthened by a participant in the American Peace Delegation, Charles Seymour, who stated in 1951: “It was only on the *George Washington* [sailing to the Paris Peace Conference] that, to his surprise, he [Wilson] learned that there was a great mass of Germans in northern Bohemia. ‘Why,’ he said, ‘Masaryk never told me that.’”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Luboš Švec, “Herbert Adolphus Miller, psychóza útisku a středoevropská otázka,” *Slovanský přehled* 93 (2007), 307-309; Dagmar Hájková, “*Naše česká věc*: Češi v Americe za první světové války” (Prague: Lidové noviny, 2011), 127; May, “H. A. Miller and the Mid-European Union of 1918,” 480. Edward H. House, *The Intimate Papers*, ed. Charles Seymour, 4 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926-28), however, refers to Masaryk only once during the war years concerning a luncheon to discuss Russia on June 12, 1918: “Masaryk talked with more sense than most people with whom I have discussed the subject, and he knows Russia better.” *Ibid.*, 3:408. House's friend and colleague, David F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture (1913-1920), immediately after the end of the World War, expressed his confidence that “Masaryk will be a powerful force for good in Europe.” See David F. Houston, *Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet, 1913-1920*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1926), 1:327.

<sup>18</sup> Miloslav Bednář, “Filosofická východiska a politický význam Masarykova pojetí evropské identity, integrity a integrace,” *Masarykův sborník* 10 (1996-98, Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2000), 13-14. For the text of the declarations of October 18 and 26, 1918, see Antonín Klimek and others, eds. *Vznik Československa, 1918* (Prague: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 1994), 317-320, and 330-332.

<sup>19</sup> Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, *The Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire* (New York: Dutton, 1930), 219-220. As a further sign of Wilson's ignorance of European affairs, he cites the American President's surprise at the existence of the Treaty of London of 1915, voiced at of the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Charles Seymour, *Geography, Justice and Politics at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1951), 9. Seymour's testimony is repeated in Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002), 237. I am grateful to Michael Van Dusen for calling my attention to

The assertions concerning Wilson's ignorance of the ethnic composition of Bohemia and Moravia, however, appear most dubious. In his textbook on comparative government, *The State*, originally published in 1889, Wilson had specifically pointed out that Bohemia and Moravia were not inhabited merely by the Czechs and, in addition, also demonstrated his knowledge of the numerical ratio of Magyars to other nationalities in pre-World War I Hungary. He wrote:

In Bohemia and Moravia the Czechs constitute considerably more than half the population; whilst in Hungary the Magyars, though greatly outnumbering any other element of the population, are less than half of the whole number of inhabitants....<sup>21</sup>

Thus, it appears that Wilson was *not* unaware of the ethnic complexities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and he would not have needed Masaryk to inform him about the existence of Sudeten Germans in Bohemia and Moravia. According to D. Perman, the one recorded view of Wilson on the issue of Czechoslovak boundaries was a brief remark to an expert of the American Delegation, Allyn Abbott Young, during the same voyage on SS *Washington* in the winter of 1918. Another member of the Delegation, William C. Bullitt, recorded this statement in his diary as:

The President today said to Young that he thought it would be too complicated to draw any new boundary in Bohemia, even though there is a clear line which could and should be drawn eliminating two million Germans from Czechoslovakia.<sup>22</sup>

## Return to Globalization

In his World War I memoirs—returning to the global perspective—Masaryk maintained that the objective of humanity's development was now to organize not only Europe but the whole world in as unified a way as possible.<sup>23</sup> The destruction of the regimes based on theocratic absolutism accelerated the rise of democracy in the wake of the war.<sup>24</sup> The policy of enlightened and upright statesmen had to be formulated with an awareness of the history and the current situation of not only their own countries and Europe, but also of the rest of the world. That meant that there was a constant requirement for global politics.<sup>25</sup> In his public pronouncements

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MacMillan's book.

<sup>21</sup> Section "Austria-Hungary," subsection "Variety of Race," in Woodrow Wilson, *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Boston: Heath, 1889), 337; rev. ed. (Boston: Heath, 1904), 336.

<sup>22</sup> D. Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914-1920* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 139, cited from William C. Bullitt, "Diary on Board SS *George Washington* December 1918," entry of December 12, *William C. Bullitt Papers* in E. M. House Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

<sup>23</sup> Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, 375-376.

<sup>24</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, Spisy 34 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2007), 438.

<sup>25</sup> Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, 383-384.



after the war, he stressed the need to reorient intellectual life toward internationalism and cosmopolitanism (*mezinárodnost a všesvětovost*), as in his address to the delegates of the Congress of the International Organization of Free Thinkers on September 6, 1920.<sup>26</sup> In a message to the Zionist Organization of America, on August 5, 1920, Masaryk further stressed that all nations would be led to an international solidarity by the spirit of true democracy and humanity.<sup>27</sup>

Speaking at the inauguration of the Slavic Institute in Paris in October 1923, Masaryk drew a distinction between two ideals of unification contested in World War I. Germany with its Pangerman imperialism, emblemized by the Berlin-Baghdad axis, aimed at gaining dominance over Europe, Asia, and Africa. This was an old-fashioned approach to unification, perpetuating the ideals of the Roman Empire to which Germany, in a sense, was an heir. However, the contrary Western ideal of global unification, based on humanity in the broadest sense of the word, prevailed. First Europe and America, and then the remaining continents, became part of this global democratic union.<sup>28</sup> Somewhat earlier, in his endorsement of the monument to War Veterans in Paris in September 1923, Masaryk again linked democracy with humanity. He summed up his belief that as a result of World War I, democracy had scored world-wide victory; most civilized nations had joined the struggle against absolutism. Democracy was nothing less than “a political expression of the moral humanitarian ideal.” The victory of the Allies was a victory of democracy and humanity, and Masaryk hoped that yesterday’s enemies would join today’s victors in embracing these ideals. Masaryk saw no cogent arguments against the ideals of humanity and democracy, which for him had also become the twin guide posts toward global unity.<sup>29</sup>

### Democracy and Humanity: Foundations of World Order

Once more Masaryk dwelt on the importance of democracy, this time for global unification. Democracy, according to him,<sup>30</sup> was not only a political system, but a

<sup>26</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, Spisy 33 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2003), 337-38. International Organization of Free Thinkers [Internationale Freidenker-Verband], est. in Brussels in 1880; its Czech section was established in 1904. In 1907 its World Congress was also held in Prague. *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, 20 vols. (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1966-1974), 5:559.

<sup>27</sup> Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 303.

<sup>28</sup> Masaryk, Tomáš G., “Řeč prezidenta Masaryka při inauguraci Institutu pro slovanská studia,” *Národní listy*, October 18, 1923, in idem, *Cesta demokracie II*, 467.

<sup>29</sup> Masaryk’s contribution for the memorial “Mémorial des Alliés” in Paris, written September 17, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 449.

<sup>30</sup> Masaryk also offered this formal definition of democracy as “the form of state, based on the advanced organization of society, on the modern view of the world, on the modern man; democracy arises from a comprehensive view of life and the world, from a new view, a new angle of vision, a new method. Recognizing and putting into effect the equality of all citizens, acknowledging the freedom of every citizen, and adopting a humanitarian principle of fraternity both internally and externally—this is a new departure not only political, but also a moral one.” Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, 365; cited also by

thorough implementation of the ideals of liberty and equality in all areas. Since World War I, Masaryk's formulation of the idea of democracy was significantly influenced by the political and constitutional principles of the United States, in which he, likewise, saw the ideal pattern for global politics of the future. In a letter on September 7, 1918, addressed to President Wilson, he professed poignantly his own attachment to those principles:

After arriving in the United States I paid my first visit to the Gettysburg Cemetery—after a year's sad experience in Russia I wished to collect my mind at this solemn place of America's great struggle for democracy and unity—I read America's eternal message, cast in iron, that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall never perish from this Earth.

In the same letter Masaryk went on to stress Wilson's role in seeking to apply the tenets of democracy from America's domestic experience to the world at large, thus illustrating Masaryk's view that democracy, created for domestic purposes to govern internal relations, was destined to enlarge its role to govern the relations among entire nations:

At an historical moment ... Lincoln formulated these principles which were to rule the internal policies of the United States, -- at a historical moment of world-wide significance you, Mr. President, shaped these principles for the foreign policies of this great Republic as well as those of the other nations: that the whole mankind may be liberated—that between nations, great and small, actual equality exists—that all just power of governments is derived from the consent of the governed, these, you say, are the principles in which Americans have been bred, and which are to constitute the foundation of world-democracy.<sup>31</sup>

As for the other pillar of international solidarity—that of “humanity”—it tended to exist in Masaryk's thought and writing from the beginning as a somewhat vague, albeit important idea. Since World War I, he sought to define the concept more precisely from moral, as well as political and social points of view. Morally, it was a sympathy and respect of every man for every other man. In a further refinement of this idea, the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth century embraced humanity as altruism, which, according to Masaryk, was a virtual synonym of love for one's neighbor as taught by the Gospels. As with democracy, Masaryk credited the French Revolution with the first application of the humanist program to politics and statecraft.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, the ideal of human progress was

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Soubigou, *Thomas Masaryk*, 267. The definition was criticized for vagueness by Bernard Michel, *La Mémoire de Prague* (Paris: 1986), p. 107.

<sup>31</sup> These statements were contained in Masaryk's letter, expressing gratitude for the recent recognition of the Czechoslovak Army, National Council and the nation; Wilson, Woodrow, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, eds. Arthur S. Link and others, 69 vols. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966-1994, 49:485.

<sup>32</sup> The French parliament declared the right of man, and the revolution proclaimed the program of freedom, fraternity, and equality. “Humanita, pacifismus a voják,” *Naše vojsko*,

generally applied in Western Europe. Germany, however, went a separate way. The theocratic state was worshipped in Prussia, which came to dominate the united Germany of Bismarck and Wilhelm II. The humanitarian ideals of Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller were unfortunately replaced by Pan-German imperialism.<sup>33</sup>

### Connection with Czech History

After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, Masaryk often referred to the tradition of democracy and human universality as evident throughout Czech history.<sup>34</sup> In his first message to the Czechoslovak Parliament on December 22, 1918, he stated: "The creation of our state and its maintenance..., our Reformation and its ideals, the suffering caused to us by the violence of the Counter Reformation instigated by the Habsburgs..., our National Revival, guided by the ideas of Humanity and the democracy that arises out of it—the whole fate of our nation is logically tied to the West and its modern democracy."<sup>35</sup> In his third message to the nation as president on March 7, 1920, Masaryk maintained that the new age of humanitarianism, ushered in by the "Great War," had been envisaged by Jan Kollár and, after him, by Pavel Šafárik and František Palacký. They all believed in the unity of humanity (*všelidskost*), not as a mere abstraction, but as a reality.<sup>36</sup> In the same year in a letter to the City of Amsterdam, Masaryk emphasized the international outlook pioneered by King George of Poděbrady, the Bohemian Brethren, and especially Jan Amos Komenský.<sup>37</sup> In his introduction to Francis Luetzow's *Bohemia: An Historical Sketch* (1919), Masaryk noted the concern of Komenský and George of Poděbrady with all-human and all-European matters, and quoted Palacký's statement that "Bohemian Reformation contained in an embryonic state all the modern sciences and institutions." Masaryk also cited the

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October 15, 1928, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 312.

<sup>33</sup> "Präsident Masaryk in Slawischen Institut," *Prager Presse*, October 18, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 467. It has been noted that, by the 1920s, Masaryk attributed the origin of the philosophy of humanity more to the French Enlightenment rather than to Herder's ideal of *Humanität*. For instance, Arne Novák, "Světová revoluce," *Lumír* 53 (1926) in Novák *Nosiči pochodní; kniha české tradice* (Prague, Literární odbor Umělecké besedy a Kruh českých spisovatelů, 1928), 222–23. Concisely, on Masaryk's use of the terms "humanity" and "democracy," see also Erazim Kohák, "Zdar a nezdar 'národní' filosofie: Patočka a Masaryk," *Filosofický časopis*, 55 (2007), 447n18.

<sup>34</sup> Jan Zouhar, "K filozofickému odkazu T. G. Masaryka," *T. G. Masaryk na přelomu tisíciletí*, Sborník z VIII. ročníku semináře, November 15, 2000 (Hodonín: Masarykovo muzeum, 2001), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 25.

<sup>36</sup> Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 229. On the connection between Czech history and worldwide democracy and humanitarianism, see also Jan Zouhar, "Jan Patočka a Masarykovo pojetí dějin," *Filosofický časopis*, 55 (2007), 467.

<sup>37</sup> Letter to the city of Amsterdam, on the occasion of laying the foundation stone for Komenský's memorial, November 14, 1920. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 362. See also Dagmar Čapková, "Masaryk a Komenský," *Masarykův sborník* 8 (1993), (Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 1993), 11.

French historian, Ernest Denis, that the cause of the Czechs was always related to worldwide issues.<sup>38</sup>

During the 1920s, Masaryk repeatedly referred to the champions of human unity in the Czech past. On June 25, 1920, he praised the French Minister to Czechoslovakia, Fernand Couget, for mentioning King George's plans for uniting not just central Europe, but the entire Continent.<sup>39</sup> In October 1922, Masaryk restated to members of the diplomatic corps in Prague the mission of Czechoslovak politics, in which the nation had to remain faithful to its historical tradition, and conscientiously "labor with all means for the preservation of peace, and perform conscientiously and devotedly the great work for the renewal of Europe, especially Central Europe, to ensure this peace for a long time, if not forever, and thus to gradually realize the noble ideals of human civilization."<sup>40</sup> In 1922, he pointed out that it was, in fact, George of Poděbrady who launched a program of eternal peace among the nations after the devastation of the wars of the Bohemian Reformation.<sup>41</sup> On an official visit to France in 1923, Masaryk added Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821-1856) to Josef Dobrovský, Kollár, and Palacký as a champion of the Czech national ideal, aspiring to a unification of mankind.<sup>42</sup> In London, during the same journey, he focused on Komenský's internationalism.<sup>43</sup>

In his war memoirs (1925), Masaryk restated his favorite historical theory that the humanitarian outlook from the Bohemian Reformation returned to the Czech National Awakening, primarily through the influence of Komenský on the German Enlightenment of Leibniz and Herder.<sup>44</sup> During the tentative steps toward a European federation in 1927 under Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann, Masaryk pointed out that Palacký had already correctly grasped that the world was becoming increasingly centralized, and no state or nation could live without

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<sup>38</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, "Introduction," in Francis Lützow, *Bohemia: An Historical Sketch* (London: Dent, 1919); Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 197.

<sup>39</sup> Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 287. King George of Poděbrady has, in fact, received recognition as a precursor of the European Union, see. for instance, Achille Elisha, "Introduction," in *Aristide Briand : la paix mondiale et l'Union européenne*, ed. Achille Elisha ; pref. René Cassin. 2e ed. rev. Louvain-la-Neuve : Academia-Bruylant, [2000], 36-41.

<sup>40</sup> "Oslava 4. výročí republiky," *Čas*, October 30, 1922, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 363.

<sup>41</sup> Tomáš G. Masaryk, "The Slavs after the War," *Slavonic Review* 1 (June 1922), 23.

<sup>42</sup> "Präsident Masaryk in Slawischen Institut," *Prager Presse*, October 18, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 469. Endorsing Leibniz's concept of the unity of human culture, Havlíček wrote in 1846: "What can be more dignified than the idea of intellectually joining all of humanity into a single nation which would grasp by reason everything in the realm of speech, and would be able to think and communicate in the same purity the truth flowing out of the intellect." Karel Havlíček, "Leibniz a jeho idea," *Česká včela* 13 (1846): n. 55, 218.

<sup>43</sup> "Pan president na londýnské radnici," *Venkov*, October 26, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 490. See also Bednář, "Filosofická východiska a politický význam Masarykova pojetí evropské identity, integrity a integrace," 9.

<sup>44</sup> Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, 391, 396.

agreement and cooperation with other states.<sup>45</sup> In 1928, Masaryk credited Palacký with proclaiming service to humanity as the Czech national program, which found its expression particularly in the teaching of the Unity of Brethren.<sup>46</sup>

### Straying: Communism and Panslavism

In 1920, Masaryk denounced Communist internationalism at the height of its post-World War I influence inside Czechoslovakia in a series of articles, "*Demokracie a bolševictví*" (Democracy and Bolshevism). He pointed out that Lenin and the Bolsheviks did reject patriotism, stressing the cosmopolitan character of their ideology, and that the life of Lenin and his associates in foreign exile increased their sense of internationalism (světovosti). According to Masaryk, however, Bolshevik internationalism and cosmopolitanism resulted in weakness. Lenin felt that communism could not be established in Russia alone, but it had to be ushered in by a world revolution. In their pursuit of such a global conflagration, the Bolsheviks tried to interfere in a great variety of countries, and thus frittered away their energies.<sup>47</sup> Bolshevik internationalism was flawed not just ideologically, but also organizationally. Its chief instrument was to be the Communist, or Third, International (the Comintern); but—as Masaryk maintained—the construction of global internationalism could not be directed from a single center. The eventual organization of the international community would be democratic, not centralistic or absolutistic, because individual states would develop toward unity in parallel and autonomist ways.<sup>48</sup>

With his interest directed toward the unification of Europe, albeit only as a part of the unification of all of humanity, Masaryk also rejected political Panslavism.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "Poselství prezidenta republiky," *Národní osvobození*, June 12, 1927, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 209-210. On the world centralization, see František Palacký, *Úvahy a projevy* (Prague: Melantrich, 1977), 87-91, 343. Palacký also described the phenomenon in "Předmluva k vlasteneckému čtenářstvu," *Časopis českého musea* 11(1837): 7: "Now then let us spread, cultivate and perfect the various branches of knowledge, and let us bring pure and God-pleasing sacrifices not only on the altar of our homeland, but also humanity. A time has surely begun in the world history, when all local barriers in the intellectual life of individual nations are always further sinking and disappearing, and when a free, constant and rapid exchange of thoughts, ideas, and sentiments occurs among the advanced nations of Europe everywhere, establishing in this manner, although through divers tongues, only one higher literature that is European and at times also universal."

<sup>46</sup> "Humanita, pacifismus a voják," *Naše vojsko*, October 15, 1928, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 312.

<sup>47</sup> "Demokracie a bolševictví," 1920, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 329.

<sup>48</sup> The incongruities of Bolshevism also included the superior even contemptuous way of dealing with smaller states, shown by the Soviet Foreign Commissar, Georgii V. Chicherin; Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 330-31.

<sup>49</sup> Arcadie Joukovsky, "T. G. Masaryk et les Slaves de l'Est," in Peška, Vladimír, and Antoine Mareš, eds., *Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, européen et humaniste*. (Paris: Etudes et documentation internationales: Institut d'études slaves, 1991), 173; Masaryk, "The Slavs after the War," 18. Concerning Masaryk's cautious and realistic approach to cooperation with

In particular, the idea of Pan Slavism as the ascendancy of Slav nations under Russia's leadership was discredited by World War I, which had opened much wider vistas.<sup>50</sup> As a general rule the individual nations ranked above Slavdom, and humanity ranked above the nations.<sup>51</sup> Masaryk did recognize that the Slav nations were closer to each other in languages than the speakers of Germanic and Romance languages; therefore, their kinship was deeper and more intimate.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, according to him, the Slavs held a cosmopolitan outlook, not a narrowly ethnic one. Thus, Czech intellectual roots in the Reformation provided a historical connection with the west, especially England; the Poles tended to gravitate intellectually toward France; Russian society also had been open to French language and culture in the eighteenth century; and South Slavs were influenced by the Italians and the Greeks.<sup>53</sup> In fact, Masaryk suggested that instead of embracing ethnic parochialism, the Slavs may become the catalysts of the coming unity of Europe and the world. He touched upon this role specifically in his speech at the Slavic Institute in Paris in October 1923, where he stated: "Dostoevsky attributed to the Russians and the Slavs a special ability to penetrate the souls of other nations.... Perhaps he was correct to a certain degree."<sup>54</sup> Masaryk returned to the topic in his message to the First International Congress of Slavists in Prague in October 1929 when he pointed out: "Slavic studies help to unite the Slavs culturally and the mission of the Slavs is to unite all nations: Slavic studies have an all-human mission (*poslání všelidské*)."<sup>55</sup> The cultivation of special ties among the Slavic nations, due to their linguistic kinship, was not a matter of politics, but of non-governmental and academic institutions.<sup>56</sup> Earlier in 1923, Masaryk had pointed out, as examples of such organizations, the Slavic Institute in Paris and the Chair of Central European History in the School of Slavonic Studies in London, as well as the Ukrainian and

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other Slav nations prior to World War I, see Vratislav Doubek, *T. G. Masaryk a česká a slovanská politika, 1882-1910* (Prague: Academia, 1999), especially, 128-144. On Masaryk's critique of Russian Pan Slavism, see also Jaroslav Papoušek, "Masaryk und Slaventum," *Slavische Rundschau*, vol. 2, (1930), 179-181.

<sup>50</sup> "Poválečné problémy Československa," dated July 9, 1932; in Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, Spisy 36 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 1997), 293. Perhaps in the Balkans Yugoslavia and Bulgaria might join in a single state. Masaryk had felt already in 1913 that a rapprochement among all the South Slavs would be useful; see "Thomas G. Masaryk Foresees Peace," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 12, 1926 in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 130.

<sup>51</sup> Papoušek, "Masaryk und Slaventum," 174-175.

<sup>52</sup> Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, 348.

<sup>53</sup> "Präsident Masaryk in Slawischen Institut," *Prager Presse*, October 18, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 469.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 470.

<sup>55</sup> "Prezident republiky o slavistice," *Lidové noviny*, October 15, 1929, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, 66.

<sup>56</sup> "Prezident Masaryk o některých věcech," *Lidové noviny*, April 8, 1928, in Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, Spisy 35 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 1994), 272. See also Papoušek, "Masaryk und Slaventum," 188-189.

Russian universities in Prague.<sup>57</sup>

### Encouraging Signs of Globalism

Throughout the 1920s and into the very early 1930s, Masaryk identified several encouraging signs of trends toward the unification of Europe, and of the world, with the latter—as pointed out earlier—actually closer to his heart. In his 1922 article, “The Slavs after the War,” he wrote that the World War and its aftermath obliged all European nations to mutual understanding, to solidarity, and to union, and he expressed a conviction that a United Nations of Europe was on the way to realization.<sup>58</sup> In his war memoirs, he similarly ventured the opinion that the “United States of Europe” was no longer merely a utopian ideal.<sup>59</sup> However, in Masaryk’s vision of the future, expressed in “The Slavs after the War,” the unification of Europe—according to his deep-rooted conviction—would logically be enlarged and completed only by the unification of humanity. This process advanced as the aftermath of World War I has brought together Europe with America and Asia; the English-speaking nations, in particular, established closer ties with the nations of East Asia. The countries became aware of their common fate, and the leaders of major nations embraced a program, aiming at the welfare of humanity that encompassed all people regardless of differences in language, nationality, or class. The unification of Europe and the world was not simply a matter of organization, which would be a mechanical process employing the existing instrumentalities. The task involved not only a need to organize, but also a need to create; namely, to replace old regimes and old statesmen with new regimes and new political leaders with a fresh vision. While economic and political structures were important, the unification also required a new intellectual infrastructure.<sup>60</sup> The war upset not only Europe, but the entire world; hence, this cataclysm should arouse a drive toward eternal peace for all nations and individuals.<sup>61</sup> It is important to stress at this point that Masaryk’s vision located the European or World Federation—in the proper

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<sup>57</sup> The two universities in Prague were the Ukrainian Free University (since 1921), and the Russian Popular University (since 1923), in addition to the Russian Law Faculty (1922). “Poselství prezidenta Masaryka,” *Lidové noviny*, October 29, 1923 in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 499.

<sup>58</sup> Masaryk, “The Slavs after the War,” 2-23.

<sup>59</sup> Masaryk, *Světová revoluce za války a ve válce, 1914-1918*, 295-96. See also the reference to the coming brotherhood of European nations; in “Prezident Masaryk o budoucnosti Maďarska,” originally printed in *Lidové noviny*, August 13, 1924, based on interview to Hungarian newspaper *Világ*, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 96.

<sup>60</sup> Masaryk, “The Slavs after the War,” 22-23. Imperial Germany demonstrated great organizational skills, but without moral guidance, it did not lead to victory, *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Masaryk, “The Slavs after the War,” 22. On Masaryk’s global vision, see also Bednář, “Filosofická východiska a politický význam Masarykova pojetí evropské identity, integrity a integrity,” 12. For a comparison with Mazzini’s idea of a world-wide federation of nations on the basis of democracy; see Francesco Leoncini, “Guiseppe Mazzini a Tomáš Masaryk jako průkopníci Evropské unie,” *Masarykův sborník*, 14 (2006-2008, Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2010), 402.

constitutional sense of the words—in a more or less distant future, although he did not rule out the possibility of a sudden leap, as mentioned later on. Under the existing circumstances, if he spoke of a “federation,” as Peter Bugge has convincingly pointed out, Masaryk did not mean “surrender of national sovereignty.”<sup>62</sup>

Masaryk stressed, with great solemnity, the relevance of globalism to Czechoslovakia’s fate. Thus, in his “Third Message as President” on March 7, 1920, pursuing the universalist line, he noted that Czechoslovakia had a special interest in not just European, but global politics. He recalled that the origin of Czechoslovakia was due to nations of Europe, Asia, and America whose help Masaryk had solicited during the War. He also assiduously disseminated knowledge of the Czech idea of human universality and interdependence. Without the world community, there would have been no Czechoslovakia.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, Masaryk emphasized, that the global character of Czech politics harmonized with the overall political evolution of the world. Thus, on the tenth anniversary of Czechoslovak independence in October 1928, he restated with special force his conviction that World War I strengthened the feeling of an outright global internationalism, because the war was truly worldwide; it showed that all nations formed and should form a coherent whole.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, Masaryk called attention to the economic aspect of globalization, whereby the world market stimulated not only global politics, but also global agriculture, industry, and banking.<sup>65</sup>

## World Organization

The League of Nations, in Masaryk’s view, played a crucial role in the movement toward the unification of mankind. He gave a particularly warm endorsement of the League in his presidential message of March 1920, pointing out that over 85 percent of the countries in the world had joined the organization. He regarded this figure as statistical proof that humanity was becoming conscious of its collective identity and was beginning to think of its development as a whole.<sup>66</sup> Masaryk suggested that the League could provide a strong directing authority (promoting cultural inter-nationality) which Europe needed, especially after the

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<sup>62</sup> Peter Bugge, “Longing or Belonging? Czech Perceptions of Europe in the Inter-War Years and Today,” *Yearbook of European Studies*, 11 (1999):114; Peter Bugge, “České obrazy Evropy za první republiky,” *Evropa očima Čechů*, Sborník ze symposia, Centrum Franze Kafky, 22-23. října 1966, ed. Eva Hahnová (Prague: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 1997), 98-99.

<sup>63</sup> Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* I, 230.

<sup>64</sup> “Jubilejní poselství prezidenta Masaryka,” *Lidové noviny*, October 30, 1928, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* III, 325.

<sup>65</sup> “Jubilejní poselství prezidenta Masaryka,” *Lidové noviny*, October 30, 1928, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* III, 330. As early as 1920, Masaryk had noted that a global economic reciprocity had represented already a degree of practical, existing internationality; “Demokracie a bolševictvi,” 1920, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* I, 330-331.

<sup>66</sup> “Third Message as President” on March 7, 1920, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* I, 229.



War.<sup>67</sup> In his statement for Czechoslovak Independence Day on October 28, 1924, Masaryk sought to place the League into a historical perspective. He stressed the perennial longing for peace, which had been expressed, among others, by the great figures of Czech history, especially George of Poděbrady and Komenský. It was this historical yearning and need that had finally found an embodiment in the League of Nations. Masaryk noted that Jean-Jacques Rousseau had dreamed about such an organization, which was at last, fittingly, founded in his favorite city of Geneva.<sup>68</sup> In particular, Masaryk valued the establishment of a mechanism in the League for open diplomacy to replace the old bilateral diplomatic system that, in his view, had led to international conflicts. Greatly disappointed by the absence of the United States from the organization, he hoped that the refusal to join might be reversed in the future. He also instructed Eduard Beneš, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, to support the League in every way, and asked to receive a copy of every publication of the League.<sup>69</sup>

With Masaryk's full support, Beneš became actively involved in the work of the League, seeking to strengthen its effectiveness. He served as its president in 1920 and was one of the delegates who drafted the Geneva Protocol in 1924, binding the contracting parties to have their conflicts resolved by arbitration by the League.<sup>70</sup> Masaryk kept a watchful eye on the operations of the League. On September 17, 1926, he congratulated Beneš on his election to the Council of the League,<sup>71</sup> and expressed satisfaction in December 1926, stating that the League had become a genuinely functioning international organ.<sup>72</sup> Two years later, he chided the Czech press for often not recognizing the importance of the League. Obviously, it could not achieve its goals, such as disarmament, immediately. It was, however, important for Czechoslovakia, among others, as a platform to be in contact with the rest of the world, and to present and defend its interests.<sup>73</sup> In 1930, Masaryk paid a special tribute to the League of Nations as a kind of world parliament, the existence of which was the best justification for the policy of President Wilson. Masaryk went on to express his delight that Wilson's reputation was improving in the United States, not only among Democrats, but also among Republicans.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> "Rozmluva s prezidentem Masarykem," *Čas*, June 13, 1920, Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, Spisy 33 (Prague: Masarykův ústav AV ČR, 2003), 280; see also "Demokracie a bolševictvi," 1920, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 329.

<sup>68</sup> "Oslavy státního svátku u prezidenta republiky," *Národní listy*, October 29, 1924, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 81.

<sup>69</sup> Soubigou, *Thomas Masaryk*, 418.

<sup>70</sup> The plenum of the League, however, did not accept the document; Soubigou, *Thomas Masaryk*, 420-21.

<sup>71</sup> He also asked Beneš to convey his greetings to Briand, Chamberlain, Cecil, Stresemann, and Ninčić; see *Lidové noviny*, September 21, 1926, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 163.

<sup>72</sup> "Prezident T. G. Masaryk Právu lidu," *Právo lidu*, December 25, 1926, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 174.

<sup>73</sup> "Prezident Masaryk o některých věcech," *Lidové noviny*, April 8, 1928, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 273.

<sup>74</sup> "Masaryk at Eighty," *New York Times Magazine*, March 2, 1930 in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, 135.

## International Treaties: Old and New

Masaryk, however, was not blind to the weaknesses of the League in enforcing its authority, and stressed that it had to rely on the support of the great powers, especially France and Britain, on whom the security of the small European nations depended. In particular, he hoped that membership in the League would keep Britain involved in continental European affairs.<sup>75</sup> He repeatedly stressed the need to perpetuate the authority of the Entente in 1921,<sup>76</sup> and again in 1922, when he pointed out that he had always recognized the Entente as the necessary authority in post-war Europe, and welcomed the efforts to enlist the United States to cooperate with Europe.<sup>77</sup> He took his message to France and Britain during his official visits there in October 1923, and exhorted President Alexandre Millerand in Paris and Minister of Foreign Affairs Lord Curzon in London to perpetuate the Entente, which had proved its worth during the war, and was necessary to ensure the effective functioning of the League of Nations for the time being.<sup>78</sup> In an interview with the Belgian journalist Robert Lerquin in 1925, Masaryk once again stressed, that an entente between France and England must be the guarantor of the rapprochement of European nations, under the auspices of the League of Nations.<sup>79</sup>

While emphasizing the crucial importance of the Great Entente—really the Franco-British alliance—for the League of Nations, Masaryk also regarded the Little Entente of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia (formed in 1920-21) as a nucleus, or an embryonic model, for future European and world unification within the parameters of the League.<sup>80</sup> In addition, he viewed the Little Entente as a continuation of his work for New Europe, as defined in the Declaration of Common Interests of Independent States of Central Europe in Philadelphia on October 26, 1918.<sup>81</sup> He reminisced about a plan to ally mutually friendly states, which he had discussed in Paris in December, 1918 with the Romanian Foreign Minister, Take Ionescu, and the Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos.<sup>82</sup> The three attempted to organize a “United States of Eastern Europe” as a federation of thirteen

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<sup>75</sup> Soubigou, *Thomas Masaryk*, 420-21.

<sup>76</sup> “Oslavy národního svátku 28. října,” *Čas*, October 29, 1921, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 156-57.

<sup>77</sup> “Nový rok na Hradě: poselství prezidenta republiky,” *Čas*, January 2, 1922, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 205-206.

<sup>78</sup> “Millerand a Masaryk o nové Evropě,” *Lidové noviny*, October 17, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 464; “Dr. Masaryk’s visit,” *Glasgow Herald*, October 24, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 485; “Odpověď pana prezidenta Masaryka Curzonovi,” *České slovo*, October 25, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 489.

<sup>79</sup> “Une journée chez le président de la République,” *La Flandre Libérale*, September 26, 1925, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 112.

<sup>80</sup> See, for instance, “Intervju med Masaryk,” *Social-Demokraten*, April 7, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 410.

<sup>81</sup> *Lidové noviny*, October 28, 1920, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 354.

<sup>82</sup> “Prezident Masaryk o aktuálních otázkách,” *Čas*, December 2, 1920, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 370.

states between Germany and Russia, reaching from Finland to Greece, to become the core of the future United States of Europe. The plan was submitted to the Peace Conference, but failed due to heightened nationalism in the area.<sup>83</sup> Subsequently, Masaryk expected that the Little Entente would be emulated by similar intimate political and economic agreements, likewise promoting integration under the auspices of the League. As specific possible examples, he cited Czechoslovak accords with Poland and Austria, the attempted accords between Poland and the Baltic states, the alliance among the countries of Transcaucasia, and an accord between Greece and Serbia.<sup>84</sup> Later, in 1924, Masaryk recalled that he would have liked to include Poland and possibly Greece in the Little Entente.<sup>85</sup>

Masaryk's enthusiasm for the Little Entente had a counterpart in his firm rejection of the projects for a Danubian Confederation. This attitude reflected Masaryk's qualms about reawakening the ghost of the former Habsburg Empire and possibly raising the specter of revisionism, which would come to the fore in connection with Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's concept of *PanEuropa*.<sup>86</sup> Masaryk was frequently asked about the formation of the Danubian Confederation in the immediate post-War period, which evidently reflected a high level of concern about the Balkanization of central Europe due to the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy. In at least five interviews between February 1919 and March 1920, Masaryk steadfastly fended off the idea of a Danubian Confederation on the grounds of the unacceptability of reestablishing political ties that might resemble the old Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>87</sup> In particular, during a visit by Austrian Chancellor Karl Renner, Masaryk firmly excluded the discussion of a confederation because that concept was just another version of the old Empire, a "restitutio in integrum."<sup>88</sup> Even a customs union with Danubian states was out of question at that time, because it might be the prelude to a political union.<sup>89</sup> After remaining dormant in the mid-1920s, the issue was revived in 1929 and into the early 1930s with the coming of the Great Depression. Masaryk argued that the rapprochement of the Danubian states to relieve the economic crisis would work best through bilateral economic agreements.<sup>90</sup> The problem militating against cooperation was the

<sup>83</sup> Bednář, "Filosofická východiska a politický význam Masarykova pojetí evropské identity, integrity a integrace," 15-17.

<sup>84</sup> Masaryk, "The Slavs after the War," 20.

<sup>85</sup> "Rozhovor pro římský list Tribuna," April 2, 1924, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 389.

<sup>86</sup> On Coudenhove-Kalergi, see Zdeněk V. David, "Masaryk and the Concept of Central Europe, 1918-1934," in Petr Hlaváček, ed., *Mitteuropa? Zwischen Realität, Chimäre und Konzept*, "Europea Pragensia 6. Prague: Collegium Europaeum, 2015, 83-85, 96-97.

<sup>87</sup> "Bohême: Une interview de Masaryk," *Le Temps*, February 2, 1919, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 82; "Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Tschechien," *Die Zeit*, August 1, 1919, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 153. "En Tchéco-Slovaquie," *Tribune de Genève*, August 20, 1919, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 156.

<sup>88</sup> "Die Unterredung mit Masaryk," *Prager Tagblatt*, December 25, 1919, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 204.

<sup>89</sup> "Future of Czechoslovakia," interview with correspondent H. Robertson Murray for *Sunday Times*, March 14, 1920 in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie I*, 245.

<sup>90</sup> "Masaryk o světové hospodářské krizi," *Lidové noviny*, September 21, 1932, in Masaryk,

attitude of Hungary, which was not able to free itself of revisionist aspirations.<sup>91</sup> In any case, Masaryk did not see a special economic cogency for linking the Danubian nations, because the river connection was no longer important for transport.<sup>92</sup>

### Other Initiatives for Harmony

As for concrete steps toward world harmony, Masaryk selected for special praise—in his article “Slavs after the War” (1922)—the international conferences in Washington in November 1921, in Cannes in January 1922, and finally the following April in Genoa (where Germany and Russia had recently signed an agreement).<sup>93</sup> He was particularly impressed by the Washington Conference convoked by President Harding that dealt with disarmament. He saw it as a good opportunity for statesmen from around the world to get to know each other. It was also a welcoming sign that the United States was not entirely distancing itself from the problems of the outside world, despite the talk about isolationism. In addition to the emphasis on the Franco-British alliance, he noted, as early as 1921, that the crux of solidarity in Europe was the relationship between France and Germany. As for disarmament, Masaryk did not embrace pacifism—but he anticipated a change of political and moral climate, initiating a truly cultured politics, which would reflect a worldwide friendship. Masaryk hoped that the Washington Conference would seek to implement its objectives through the League of Nations, and not weaken it by establishing separate organs.<sup>94</sup>

As addressed earlier, speaking at the inauguration of the Slavic Institute in Paris in October 1923, Masaryk stressed that the German ideal of unification with its Pangerman imperialism was overcome in World War I by the contrary Western ideal of humanity in the broadest sense of the word. Masaryk undoubtedly had the League in mind for this grand design of world unification.<sup>95</sup> His faith in the League of Nations was subsequently bolstered by the Geneva Protocol of October 2, 1924, which provided for peaceful settlement of international disputes, attempting to strengthen the international machinery, and overcome the weakness of the League structure. He gladly signed the Protocol himself.<sup>96</sup>

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*Cesta demokracie* IV, 302; “Masaryk o dnešní Evropě,” originally published in *Berliner Tagblatt*, October 5, 1932, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* IV, 310.

<sup>91</sup> “Masaryk o evropském společenství,” interview with Evelyn Wrench for *Daily Telegraph*, April 26, 1932, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* IV, 260–61.

<sup>92</sup> “Prezident Masaryk o Panevropě,” *České slovo*, December 5, 1929, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* IV, 88.

<sup>93</sup> Masaryk, “The Slavs after the War,” 20–21.

<sup>94</sup> “France need fear no aggression by future Germany,” *New York World*, in November 28, 1921 in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* II, 173–175.

<sup>95</sup> Masaryk, Tomáš G., “Řeč prezidenta Masaryka při inauguraci Institutu pro slovanská studia,” *Národní listy*, October 18, 1923, in idem, *Cesta demokracie* II, 467.

<sup>96</sup> “Oslavy státního svátku u prezidenta republiky,” *Národní listy*, October 29, 1924, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie* III, 81. The Protocol was eventually rejected by the British government, because of the Dominions’ opposition, in March 1925.

Masaryk continued to favor a reconciliation of Germany with the Entente powers, being convinced that post-War Germany had been cured of the curse of the theocratic absolutism that had bedeviled the country under the Second Empire. In June 1924, he praised the policy of reconciliation pursued by British Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald, in which the victors of World War I offered Germany a possibility to meet her obligations in an open and friendly way. Masaryk saw here an effective way to enhance international cooperation.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, he heartily approved the much more significant Locarno Conference and Treaties of October 5-16, 1925, praising Joseph A. Chamberlain's tact in presiding, and Briand's generous policy. He also accorded thanks to the German negotiators for their contribution.<sup>98</sup> A few days later on Czechoslovak Independence Day, he expressed satisfaction that the Locarno Treaties not only confirmed the solidarity of the largest states of Europe, but also guaranteed the rights of smaller nations.<sup>99</sup>

Masaryk was more reserved toward the next major initiative of the League of Nations, which focused on disarmament. The League appointed the Preparatory Commission for a Disarmament Conference in 1925, with the participation of powerful outsiders: the United States and, from 1927, also the Soviet Union. Having held several sessions between May 1926 and December 1930, the Commission drafted a convention to be discussed at a Disarmament Conference called by the League for February 1932. Observing these steps, Masaryk had maintained his opposition to pacifism since at least 1920.<sup>100</sup> Although he considered the disarmament worthwhile,<sup>101</sup> he repeatedly distanced himself from Chelčický's and Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance to evil.<sup>102</sup> During the last gasp of the Disarmament Conference in September 1933, he did affirm his support for the League's initiative; he favored disarmament if it was gradual and simultaneously international.<sup>103</sup> In the meantime, however, the Disarmament Conference in 1932 and 1933 was ominously coming to an end over the French insistence on—and the German opposition to—preserving all the previous treaties, including the military clauses of Versailles.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>97</sup> "Pozitivní diplomacie," *Přítomnost*, June 26, 1924, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 50.

<sup>98</sup> "Po skončení velkého díla," *Národní osvobození*, October 18, 1925 in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 114.

<sup>99</sup> "Letošní 28. říjen," *Národní osvobození*, October 29, 1925, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 116.

<sup>100</sup> "Third Message of President Masaryk, March 7, 1920," in Masaryk, Tomáš G., *Cesta demokracie I*, 231. See also "Armádě," August 14, 1923, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie II*, 438.

<sup>101</sup> "Prezident Masaryk o některých věcech," *Lidové noviny*, April 8, 1928, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie III*, 273.

<sup>102</sup> "Gespräch mit Masaryk," *Berliner Tagblatt*, September 29, 1929, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, 60; *Národní osvobození*, February 27, 1930, Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, 129; "Ist der Friede gefährdet?" *Prager Tagblatt*, September 30, 1930, in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, 174.

<sup>103</sup> "Masaryk o demokracii a diktatuře," originally in *Právo lidu*, October 1, 1933, [based on interview for French reporter for *Quotidien*] in Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie IV*, 376.

<sup>104</sup> After Hitler came to power, Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference on

As Masaryk's twilight years approached, his vision of a united world community was increasingly challenged not only by the rise of the totalitarian powers, but also on the side of the democracies by the rise of European separatism. The Euro-centric challenge, which germinated since the start of the 1920s with Coudenhove's *Paneuropa*, continued to gain ground in the Briand Initiative of the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>105</sup>

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October 14, 1933. The last futile meeting of the conference, was held from May 29 to June 11, 1934.

<sup>105</sup> On Coudenhove and Briand, see David, "Masaryk and the Concept of Central Europe, 1918-1934," 96-97.

# **The Role of Memory in the Centennial Commemorations of the Beginning of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918, and the End of World War I on November 11, 1918**

**James W. Peterson**

## **Introduction**

This paper was prepared for a conference that took place several days before the Centennial of the Czechoslovak state and two weeks before the Centennial of the end of World War I.<sup>1</sup> Memory plays a powerful role in linking the two events in the culture of both Czechs and Slovaks. Nationalism since the 1848 revolutions had thrust both the idea of more political autonomy and eventually the dream of a state into the minds of both ethnic groups. However, memories of state creation are complicated, for Slovaks never concluded that the Czechs had treated them fairly with the state whose life span extended from 1918 until 1993. Eventually, the Slovaks created their own state and have managed it successfully for a quarter of a century. However, the break-up of the state does not undercut the important role of memory for both in dealing with the consequences of their own pasts and in planning for future accomplishments. Memory of their experience in World War I is also important, for Czechs and Slovaks, in fact, fought on both the side of the Central Powers and the Entente during that costly war. Poetry from the front lines as well as artistic expressions during and after the war preserved the memory of what each people had undergone. The Austro-Hungarian Empire initially ordered both to take part in the conflict, and for Slovaks the orders came from Budapest and for the Czechs Vienna. However, many soldiers defected to the other side and fought against the Central Powers as part of the Czech and Slovak Legion. The memory of that group is strong, for its heroic march through all of Russia after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution helped convince the West that such groups deserved the right of self-determination within a new state. Thus, memories of the war itself are inextricably interconnected to commemoration of success in setting up a state of their own. This article will explore memory as a cultural force during these dual centennials.

A beginning and an end! For Czechoslovakia, the beginning of their state was inextricably intertwined with the end of their participation in World War I, and the end of the war itself. After one hundred years, it is memory that both creates and shapes the significance of the twin events. It is also true that memory in 2018, and after, of those events is different in many ways from the memories that accompanied the birth of a state out of the tragedy of the Great War. Pierre Nora has been instrumental in articulating how “Realms of Memory” can draw on the “collective heritage” of a state and pull together “the country’s shattered identities.” It is the task of historians to reconstruct the pieces that led to the experiences of a state, but

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally presented at the 33rd Annual Interdisciplinary Conference in the Humanities, held at the University of West Georgia, October 27, 2018. The author acknowledges and thanks William J. Peterson for locating the poems and musical scores for this project. He also contributed valuable commentary about the text itself.

those who focus on the mental view of that process create images that consist of “rememoration” rather than “reconstruction.” As Nora thought about the French experience, he proposed that the very state itself could be an “entirely symbolic reality.”<sup>2</sup>

Realms of memory are also important in the creation of a sustaining sense of national identity. Through them, a person or citizen of the country is in effect holding up a “mirror” that reflects and displays a range of past experiences of those peoples who have been part of the state. Periodic uses of the mirror can bring up treasured memories that have the power to restore “a renewed sense of national self-consciousness.” Within the nation, there are inevitably also “symbolic sites” that citizens can visit in efforts to restore both past memories and imagine future activities for the community.<sup>3</sup> Many times, the public and private connect through these “sites,” for there are undoubtedly family members who served in the wars and who may even have lost their lives. At times, such wartime memories can perform as “alloys” that feed into overthrow of an existing regime and construction of its replacement. This happened in dramatic fashion in Russia in 1917, as the Bolsheviks replaced the tsarist regime politically but also attempted to foster new memories of what those earlier centuries meant in terms of repression of the people and also what the new age that was dawning could mean for the memories of future generations.<sup>4</sup>

Memories within the “geographic space” known as Central Europe centered traditionally on the pull and faith of peoples toward the Habsburg Empire. In that sense, the Austrian rulers dominated for centuries the multitude of peoples within that arena but, equally important, the “European space of memory.” However, following their collapse in 1918, memories of them shifted to the concept that they represented only Austrians/Germans. The plurality of formerly subordinate non-Germanic peoples embarked upon journeys to forge their own identities and fortifying cultural memories.<sup>5</sup> Their experiences in war, whether with the Austrian Army or with the breakaway units such as the Czechoslovak Legion, became “triggers” that exploded into hopes for new realities. In recollecting the deaths of so many of their people, they constructed “war memorials” that transformed their pointless deaths and sacrifices into an “enduring moment.” With the passage of time, visits to those memorials became rituals that infused present and future

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<sup>2</sup> Pierre Nora, “Preface to the English Language Edition.” In: *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Volume I: Conflicts and Divisions*. Under the Direction of Pierre Nora. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer, (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1996), xv-xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence D. Kritzman, “Foreword: In Remembrance of Things French,” in *Realms of Memory*, ix-xiv.

<sup>4</sup> Jay Winter, “Sites of Memory,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, Susannah Radstone, Bill Schwarz, eds., (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 312-317.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques Rider, “Mitteleuropa as a lieu de Mémoire,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, edited by Astrid Erll, Anagar Nünning, in collaboration with Sara B. Young, (New York: DeGruter, 2010), pp. 39-44.



objectives with both foundation and meaning.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 pulled together memories of great eras in the Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak pasts that stretched back a full millennium to their revered ruler Saint Wenceslaus. Their wartime contributions and sacrifices actually paved the way in the minds of the West to the imperative of a Czechoslovak nation-state. Linking war and state foundation together was one achievement of the hallowed Czech Legion, a military unit composed of Czechs and Slovaks who had broken away from the Austrian military that conscripted them, to join an independent unit that fought on behalf of the victorious powers such as Great Britain and the United States. In sum, there were three separate, but intricately related, sets of events, that created memories that had meaning even one century later!

## Memories of the Founding of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918

### *Musical Commemorations*

Works of music have a life that exceeds their first performances, and oftentimes they become part of the memory that a people has about important times and events in their history. In the case of the founding of Czechoslovakia, a discussion initially emerged both about how to define a national anthem and about how to define a “homeland.” Clearly, their homeland had been problematic in past centuries, with Bohemia and Moravia part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire based in Vienna, and Slovakia under the rule of the Magyars or Hungarians in Budapest. In addition, the new state included a sizeable German population, Ruthenians, Hungarians, and Poles from the Těšín region (Agnew 2004, 175). Thus, the homeland for the new state was not a foregone conclusion or a “given.” It was an entity that required a search and not a previously defined space. At the time of the formation of Czechoslovakia, three important national songs were in general circulation: “Kde domov můj?,” “Nad Tatrou sa blýska,” and “Hej Slované!” The publisher Urbánek brought them together in one volume under the title “Three Czechoslovak Hymns” (1919). “Where is my home?” (“Kde domov můj?”) became the first part of the official national anthem of Czechoslovakia with “Lightning flashes over the Tatra” (“Nad Tatrou sa blýska”) as the second part of the official anthem.

“Where is my home?” was first heard in Prague in 1834. The production of a work by Josef Kajetán Tyl, *Fidlovačka* (“No Anger and No Brawl”), at the Estates Theatre 21 December 1834 (“Four scenes from Prague life”) included an overture and 21 musical numbers composed by František Škroup (Tyrrell 1988, 325). Tyl asked the composer for a “patriotic chorus” and the composer provided “Kde domov můj?” (“Where is my home?”). The song “Where is my home?” is the “central focus of the fair scene” (Tyrrell 1988, 163).

“Lightning flashes over the Tatra,” based on a Slovakian folk tune, functions as the second part of the official anthem (1919). The one-stanza text of “Lightning

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Feuchtwang, “Ritual and Memory,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, pp. 288-298.

flashes over the Tatra” (“Nad Tatrú sa blyská,” by Janko Matúška (1844), begins with these lines: “Lightning flashes over the Tatras, the thunder pounds wildly. / Let them pause, brothers, they will surely disappear, the Slovaks will revive.” “Nad tatrú” is unquestionably based on a Slovak folksong and based specifically on “Kopala studienku” (a folksong with the text “She was digging a well, looking into it”). The text suggests that the threatening weather will not hold the Slovaks back – they will revive, and they will prevail.

One additional song was prominent in both the war years and the post-war years: “Hey Slavs!” (“Hej, Slované”). “Hej, Slované” served as a marching song for Czech troops in 1915.<sup>7</sup> And “Hej, Slované” assumed importance on the Russian front early in the war. From the beginning, Czechs were prepared to protest the requirement that they arm themselves against the Russians. According to one report, Czech troops leaving Prague for the front at the end of September of 1914 carried large flags and banners which declared that “We are marching against the Russians and we do not know why.”<sup>8</sup> As early as August in 1914, Czechs living near Kiev received permission from Tsar Nicholas II to work in tandem with Russians against the Germans and Austro-Hungarians.<sup>9</sup> And these troops were determined to convince Czechs serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army to switch their allegiance and then join their compatriots in the special unit (“družina”). Masaryk, in communication with the Russian General Staff, requested that Russian troops refrain from firing on soldiers who were waving “white cloths” and singing “Hej, Slované.”<sup>10</sup>

In the evening of October 30, two days after the founding of the state, there was a concert in which three compositions of the Czech composer Josef Suk were performed. One was “Meditace na staročeský chorál ‘Svatý Václav.’” In it, the early hymn about the tenth century “St. Wenceslaus” appears in changed format, but it reminded its listeners on that day of the sweep and greatness of the Czech past over a millennium. A second was “Praga,” and its importance lay in the way it commemorated a love of the new capital city of Prague, about which also there were profound memories. For example, the opera *Libuše*, by Bedřich Smetana, was performed in 1881 on the occasion of the opening of the Czech National Theater, an event that constituted a victory for Czech nationalists during imperial times. At the end of the opera the mythical Queen *Libuše* extends her arm over a great and empty valley and predicts key events that will happen there. One of those events will be creation of a “Golden City,” and that is the descriptive label that came to characterize Prague.

In the concert that celebrated the founding, the third composition performed was “Zrání” or “Ripening,” based on a poem by Antonín Sova. In it, the author

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<sup>7</sup> R.W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks*, (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1965), p. 287.

<sup>8</sup> H. Louis Rees, *The Czechs During World War I: The Path to Independence*, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> David Bullock, *The Czech Legion 1914-20*. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009) pp 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

composed a tone poem that interconnected his “own life, human life, and the growth of a blade of corn.”<sup>11</sup> An ambitious work, Suk’s composition calls for a large orchestra including six trumpets and an offstage female chorus. In his book *Opera and Ideology in Prague*, Brian S. Locke characterizes the poem with these words: “First encountered by the composer in 1912 during the beginning stages of his work on the tone poem, Sova’s *Zrání* merges a human being with his/her natural surroundings, likening his/her maturation to the cyclical process of a day.”<sup>12</sup> Critics explored the possibility that the theme of the work might be understood in relation to the emergence of a new nation, namely Czechoslovakia. If it was not a nationalistic composition, it did anchor the Czech future in pre-existing natural and human elements.

In 1924, on the sixth anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak state, first-time performances of at least two compositions were significant. Leoš Janáček had composed “Taras Bulba” as a symphonic poem in 1915-18, which were actually years of war. However, the first performance occurred in Prague in 1924, and its meaning is elusive. The setting is actually Russia, and it is descriptive of violent acts committed by family members against one another. Some have surmised that there was a parallel between the founding of new political and social patterns in Russia and those in Czechoslovakia. Thus, the freshness of new beginnings may have been the theme. The symphonic poem itself is based on a novella by N.V. Gogol—set in fifteenth-century Russia—from 1824. Bulba is a vigorous Cossack warrior, and the novella celebrates the strength of Russia and of the Orthodox faith. Although Janáček completed the score on March 29, 1918, the work’s premiere performance in Prague took place six years later, at which time the composer added at the head of the work the dedication “To Our Czechoslovak Armed Forces.” There are two important points here about this story of the death of a warrior at the hands of the enemy. First, Taras Bulba dies a martyr to the cause and second, he dies with the conviction that the cause, so to speak, will prevail by means of commitment on the part of others (the cause is Russian vitality and strength). The analogy to the Czechoslovak experience was clear.

A second work was the symphonic poem “Legend of the Dead Victors, Op. 35b” by Suk. In it the composer specifically commemorates those who gave their lives for Czechoslovak independence during World War I. Importantly, another performance took place in 1937 at the funeral of the founder President Tomáš Masaryk. The former leader had been a galvanizing force behind the development of Czech nationalism in the late nineteenth century, and he had organized the political forces that merged to constitute the new state during World War I. Memory played a powerful role in linking historic events with leading personalities through the medium of music.

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<sup>11</sup> Vladimír Nosek, *The Spirit of Bohemia: A Survey of Czechoslovak History, Music, and Literature*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1926), pp. 353-357.

<sup>12</sup> Brian S. Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague: Polemics and Practice at the National Theater 1900-1938*, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), p. 157.

*Political Events Accompanying the Founding*

The transition on October 28, 1918 was a simple one. President Wilson of the United States had put together a list of conditions for an armistice, and the Austrian leaders in Vienna simply accepted them. In Prague, the imperial representative turned in the keys to his office at the Castle and returned by train to Vienna. Those secretaries and other personnel at the castle watched the handover of power take place and then went back to their desks and normal administrative tasks. In fact, the Czechoslovak leaders were not really starting a political life of their own with a blank slate. During the last decades of Habsburg rule, they had permission to establish their own political parties within limits as well as a certain level of local government.<sup>13</sup> Of course, there was now a need to breathe life into a blend of old and new institutions within the framework of a newly written Constitution.

The immediate elevation of Masaryk to the Presidency was a result of a near lifetime of contributions to the creation of a new state. During the war, the National Council in Paris was the seat of Czech planning for their future nation-state. In addition, Masaryk had located himself and advisors in Geneva, Switzerland, and from there he issued directives and advice about political steps that would lead to the hoped-for outcome. On July 13, 1918, he set up the National Committee in Prague, and that gave Czech leaders a location in their homeland for supervising the transition from one regime to the next.<sup>14</sup> Masaryk had also traveled both West and East in order to develop support for the new state. Trips to the United States included visits with émigré groups from the nationalities that would be part of the new Czechoslovakia, and they were very supportive of the state concept that Czech and Slovak leaders were developing. In fact, a key founding document of the state was the Pittsburgh Agreement that was signed in Pennsylvania and that prefigured the October 28 transition and transfer of power in Prague. In the East, Masaryk visited units of the Czech Legion that were doing battle in Russia against the Habsburg forces and eventually even against the Bolsheviks who took power in November 1917. In all of his visits, the leader's message was the "rule of law and Rights of Man" as the foundation stone of the new political entity.<sup>15</sup> It is also striking that it was the Bohemian and Moravian desire for independence that really ended the Austro-Hungarian Empire, for their industrial power had been the heart of its economic strength.

During Masaryk's trip to the United States, he had extensive discussions with Slovak representatives, and they came to a mutual agreement about the need for a Dual Federation.<sup>16</sup> Slovak expectations centered on an equal role for them with the Czechs in that federation, for they had emerged from the war with a common

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<sup>13</sup> Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2004), p. 170.

<sup>14</sup> Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, p. 170.

<sup>15</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd, 1970), p. 257.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

experience together in the Czechoslovak Legion. However, such discussions about life in a common state had not taken place during the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> While Czechs had been firmly situated in the Austrian half of the Empire, Slovaks had lived under Hungarian rule, and so the two ethnic groups did not have a lived history in common. It was only in 1915 that Masaryk first noted that union with Slovakia was a Czech objective for the post-war period. He included the Slovak leader Milan Rastislav Štefaník in the triumvirate of power that included Edward Beneš and himself. In October of that year, Czech and Slovak immigrant leaders signed the Cleveland Agreement in Ohio that included provisions for a federal state with two territorial units, each with its own language and governmental units. In Paris, the National Council soon bore the label Czecho-Slovak, while the Czechoslovak Legion emerged in May 1917.<sup>18</sup>

However, the Pittsburgh Pact of spring 1918 watered down some of the Slovak apparent gains. Instead of full political power, the smaller group was allocated “only a degree of linguistic and administrative autonomy for Slovakia in a common state.”<sup>19</sup> The official linkage between the two ethnic groups occurred through the Martin Declaration of October 30, 1918. This document established the Slovak National Council, published the Declaration of the Slovak Nation, broke off relations with Hungary, and proposed “political union with the Czechs in a common state.”<sup>20</sup> Slovak disenchantment with the new accord emerged very early, for on November 3, 1918, Czech protestors against former rule by the Catholic Habsburgs pulled down the statue in Prague to the Virgin Mary. This angered Slovaks, as their population was more Catholic than Protestant, in contrast to the Czechs.<sup>21</sup> After Czech leaders created a Slovak Ministry that downplayed their co-equal role in the new federation, Slovaks in December created a Slovak People’s Party that began to challenge the Czech agenda.<sup>22</sup>

In the end, the 1918 concept of Czechoslovakism did not work, and this was related in part to the lack of a common history before World War I. Both peoples hoped to attain a sense of shared destiny and values, but frustration for Slovaks was a continuing theme.<sup>23</sup> Memory was critically important in the process that led to the break-up of the state in 1993. The two groups did not possess a set of shared memories prior to 1918, and Czechs under Masaryk clearly coupled promotion of the state with a relegation of Slovaks to a subordinate position on many fronts. The memory of Slovaks after 1918 included disappointment and unfulfilled aspirations.

The writing of the 1920 Constitution was a political event that made that document into a repository of memory and part of the lived history for the ensuing

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<sup>17</sup> Kirschbaum, Stanislav J., *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, Second Edition. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), p. 144.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-51.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>23</sup> Carol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 24-27.

one hundred years. However, it also encapsulated historic memories that extended well back into earlier Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak experiences. For instance, after the Constitution of 1920 was written, there was a Slovak resistance to the declaration that the new language would be Czecho-Slovak. Slovaks perceived this label as a threat to their separate language, culture, and ethnicity.<sup>24</sup> While Slovaks received protection under the new Constitution of 1920, could use their language in the schools and in contacts with officials, there really was no component of Slovak autonomy.<sup>25</sup>

### *The Founding as a Culmination of Historic and Cultural Memories*

Invocation in indirect and direct ways of great figures and themes from the Czech past underpinned the architecture behind the construction of the state itself. This collective and focused memory of the past included references to key figures, political movements, and nationalistic as well as revolutionary themes.

Celebration of the new state took place on October 28 in the square known as Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square), the site of the National Museum. In addition, the activities were situated beneath the statue of St. Wenceslas, a work of art that Czechs had put in front of the National Museum in the earlier part of the century. Strikingly, the pedestal of the statue included a statement that was meaningful in terms of the Czech nationalism of the moment: "Do not let us or our descendants perish."<sup>26</sup> From the fourteenth century, Czech memories engaged the personality of Charles IV, who served as Bohemian King as well as Holy Roman Emperor. His name eventually was attached to the prominent Charles Bridge and the important Charles University. Overall, Czechs portrayed the events of 1918 as the coming to fruition of the Bohemian dreams of St. Wenceslaus and Charles IV. Their memories infused the state creation with a sense of confidence in past historic figures and models for the future.

In the early part of the fifteenth century, the Hussite Movement became also a memory that infused Czech hopes in 1918 for a meaningful future. Jan Hus rebelled against pressures from the Roman Catholic Church for universal adherence to its doctrines and strictures. His martyrdom in 1415 became the basis for a Hussite revolt against the Holy Roman Empire, and the actual battles included a Bohemian victory at Vitkov Hill in 1421. General Jan Žižka led the troops to a victory over Rome and thus became an emblem of Czech possibilities. During World War I, there were many who compared his military victories to those of the Czech Legion that fought vigorously against Austrian forces and won significant victories. A hymn or battle song composed between 1415 and 1421 within the Hussite military became a galvanizing melody in the early twentieth century and was incorporated by composers such as Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček, and Suk. Its opening passage is

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<sup>24</sup> Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, p. 169.

<sup>25</sup> Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, pp. 178-80.

<sup>26</sup> Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 100.

“Kdož jste boží bojovníci?” As such it links the Czech warriors of the fifteenth century to those of the twentieth in a powerful way.

The 1848 revolutions were also an inspiration to Czech memories of the foundation for state construction in 1918. One outgrowth of that upheaval was the birth of Czech dreams of federalism within the framework of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>27</sup> At that time, there was no thought of a breaking off as a separate state, but more local autonomy in governmental structures was a result of those revolutions. The composer Smetana celebrated that new thinking with music that pointed to a cherishing of Czech traditions, but the following decade of the 1850s was one of crack-down and firm centralization, and so the eventually famous composer actually moved out of the Bohemian/Moravian setting for a number of years. In spite of that counter-revolution, memory of the political goals developed in 1848 became inspirational to those who were creating the state a full seven decades later.

Construction of the Czech National Theater led to its completion in 1881, but the laying of its cornerstone in 1868 was an equally important event that catalyzed growing nationalism. The stone itself originated in Říp, the location onto which the mythical Bohemian first settler Praotec Čech entered at some unknown time. There were trains that transported 60,000 Bohemians and Moravians to the ceremony, as it would be average people who would pay for the building. Smetana as well as the prominent Czech historian František Palacký appeared at the celebration and made presentations. Memory of these 1868 events became part of the celebrations in 1918, for that year was its fiftieth anniversary. Alois Jirásek spoke at the National Theater itself in May 1918, and he referred to it as that “little golden chapel on the Vltava.”<sup>28</sup> An earlier commemoration entailed the memory in 1915 of the five hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus. The National Theater performed Smetana’s “Libuše,” and the Czech University Rector Dr. Václav Novotný gave a lecture on the importance of Hus in Bohemian history as well as in twentieth century remembrances and hopes for a more independent future.<sup>29</sup> Thus, a physical, historical structure as well as decades of Czech language performances within the theater, worked their way into memories during the critical war years.

### **Memories of November 11, 1918, and the Czechoslovak Experience in the First World War**

Commemorations of the Centennial of the end of World War I were significant in a high number of western state settings, including those of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In many locations, it was the sounding of bells that offered the haunting reminders of what was lost and who made the personal sacrifices. For example, in Manchester, United Kingdom, schoolchildren on November 4, 2018, retraced the last walk of the wartime poet Wilfred Owen. On November 11 itself,

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<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 256.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> Cynthia Paces, *Prague Panoramas: National Memory and Sacred Space in the Twentieth Century*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), p. 82.

3,000 bell towers rang out at first in a muffled way and later in their normal tones. With this action, the bells symbolized the reconciliation of enemies. Since seventeen million military and civilian deaths occurred in that war, such remembrances carried great meaning.<sup>30</sup>

### *Czech and Slovak Wartime Memories in Poetry and Music*

Czech poetry includes a number of works that express the meaning of the events of the war and bear mention one century later. Otakar Theer in “The Dead,” a poem set to music by Boleslav Vomáčka (See Appendix A) notes that the awfulness of the war has actually halted the traditional ringing of the bells. There is no longer the sound of songs or smiles of happiness. Soldiers at the end of their lives know that they will never again hear the “fully tinkling sound of future cups.” Instead, the only sound is that of “a sobbing voice” for “those who pass away.” The thoughts of soldiers at the front and their longing for home receive expression in Vomáčka’s song cycle *1914*, in “A Soldier in the Field,” using a poem by Fráňa Šrámek (See Appendix B). The speaker imagines a day when he will again walk through the streets of his town and will spend his first three days at home watching his wife. As he puts flowers in the windows, he will discover “green, blessed life” under their leaves. He will be a farmer and shepherd rather than a soldier, and “that will be beautiful, beautiful.” These images have worked their way into Czech memories and persist even so many years later.

In the world of music, Boleslav Vomáčka in his “1914 Cycle of Five Songs” makes personal the impact of the war on the soldiers at the front. In the first song “1914” he utilizes a poem of Rudolf Medek to convey how “the world is suffocated.” Those who are losing their lives are the “Youthful blossom of Your Nation.” In the second and third songs, Vomáčka brings the sad message down to the level of the individual. In the second “A Soldier in the Field” (see above), a soldier muses on the feeling that he finds it very tough to die in a crowd and reflects constantly on his family. The third song “Wounded” setting a poem by B. Hanuš laments that the soldier will “die in sorrow,” as “my young blood flows in foreign lands.” Now, the blossoms do not bloom forth, but he remembers back to a time when “the earth sings in spring.” Similarly, Emil Axman’s “Raport,” also setting a verse by Šrámek, in his “From the Army” collection portrays a soldier who lies dying on a field next to his horse that has also been shot. Why, he asks, does his horse need to suffer? At the same time, it is well known that there will be a time when “a man must go.”

On the one hand, there is some music whose poetry takes on a heroic cast such as Novák’s “Three Czech Songs” (Poet J. V. Sládek). “Into the battle!” is one that he dedicated to the Czech Legion. In it the soldiers fight for “every inch of land, for

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<sup>30</sup> Toby Helm, “Bells will ring out: world to mark end of first world war, 100 years on,” *The Guardian*, August 12, 2018, < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/12/armistice-day-first-world-war-wilfred-owen>>, accessed November 4, 2018.



every ear of grain and fruit tree.” With the sound of the “darkly clattering weapons” in the background, the military forces do all they can “for the native land.” On the other hand, in Ladislav Vycpálek’s “The Austrian Emperor” (Moravian Folksong), he pulls in a Slovak folk song from Moravia that describes how the soldier has been enlisted into the Army by the Austrian Emperor. However, his girl-friend is pressuring him instead to stay home. In another song by the same composer, “In the town of Holumúc,” a different soldier located on the front in the west worries that he will be buried “in this French land.” As he thinks about his girl-friend, he laments the fact that his food is horsemeat and that he must sleep on his munitions. Vycpálek utilizes poems by the Slovak Valarye Brusová in a collection called “In the Palm of God.” In one of those, “Age after age,” the central dilemma for Czechs during the war is very transparent. The meadow is beautiful, and the great-grandfathers have plowed it for generations. However, in the distance “the battle rages.” Through these human tragedies, Czech poets and musical composers have created memories out of a tragedy that fortified the Czech spine and remained inspirational for their descendants through the next century.

After the end of the war Vycpálek composed the “Cantata of the Last Things of Man, op. 16.” Its first performance was in 1922, and it consisted of texts from Moravian folksongs. The piano-vocal score presented the text from beginning to end in both Czech and German and it included, after the title page, versions of the text in Czech, German, French, English, and Slovak (Hudební Matice Umělecké Besedy v Praze, 1922). It is meant “to give a glimpse of death and nothingness, and to emphasize only the spiritual side of man.”<sup>31</sup> Values that shine through included equality and the strength of the human spirit. The memory of wartime sacrifice thus links up with the democratic values of the emerging Czechoslovakia.

In the 1918-24 period, there were efforts by the Czechs to preserve the memories of those who had fallen during the war. There were memorials set up on battlefields and ones in the home towns of the soldiers as well. Lists of names were always alphabetical in order to preserve the sense of equality on the battlefield, and the names of civilians from the home front were included many times as well. Those who returned from the fronts were celebrated, while an unknown soldier from the eastern front was buried in Prague in 1922. On Vitkov Hill, the site of the Hussite victory in 1421, the citizens created a new memorial to the Legionaries in 1928. The general effort was to create a shared process of mourning and “to make mass death meaningful and to legitimate suffering and sacrifice.” Later historical events sometimes compromised such efforts, for the Nazis eventually removed the Unknown Soldier’s remains from his location in Prague. At the same time, November 11 remained the important day of remembrance, and its proximity to All Saints Day and the October 28 founding date for the state reinforced the collective effort to cherish the lives of the fallen.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rosa Newmarch, *The Music of Czechoslovakia*, (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942), 231-232.

<sup>32</sup> Laurence Van Ypersele, “Mourning and Memory, 1919-45,” translated by Helen McPhail, *A Companion to World War I*, edited by John Horne, (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 576-82.

### *Wartime Memories and the Creation of the State*

On the one hand, one Czech victory during the war became a memory that helped pave the way for western support for the new state. It was the battle of Zborov on July 2, 1917, and the accomplishment was that of the Czech Legion in tandem with Russian forces in their battle with the Austrian-led forces. A direct consequence was Russian leader Alexander Kerensky's decision to grant the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris control over the Czech Legion units in Russia. Several months later, the same Paris-based organization took over direction of Czech Legion units on the western front in France.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, Austrian figures did all possible to repress forward-looking efforts by Czech either to stand up for themselves or to evoke memories of past historic figures and events in ways that might disrupt the empire. In the famous fictional work by Jaroslav Hašek, the "Good Soldier Švejk" hears in a pub about the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and he dismisses the event as "some Sarajevo—politics—some archduke, that is nothing to me. It holds no promise."<sup>34</sup> For such comments, the imperial police picked up both Švejk and the pubkeeper, as these sentiments were detrimental to Austria's efforts. In fact, the Czechs met the 1914 news about mobilization on behalf of Austria with "tears and silent dejection." Thus, the Habsburgs invoked an emergency decree in order to recruit the Czech troops. Czechs did not want to contribute financially to the Austrian military effort and so they made their investments instead in Czech banknotes.<sup>35</sup>

In that respect, the Czech desire to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus in 1915 became a real political controversy, for it would have contributed to mobilization of Czech nationalism. The Austrians removed important books from libraries and also deleted the names of executed Hussite leaders from Old Town Hall.<sup>36</sup> A new statue of Hus by Ladislav Šaloun did go through unveiling on the Hus anniversary date of July 6. However, the Habsburgs did not permit any ceremonies or speeches.<sup>37</sup> Czech nationalist organizations in working class districts had been excited about the hoped-for celebration, and eventually a meeting was held on the special occasion, at which Karel Baxa gave the key speech. Thus, the Czech efforts to preserve the memory of Hus and link him to nationalistic efforts during the war years assisted in making the Czech nation "the vehicle for carrying Europe into the modern era."<sup>38</sup>

Key wartime events that accompanied the state's creation are also worthy of

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<sup>33</sup> Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, p. 167.

<sup>34</sup> Jaroslav Hašek, "The Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk," in *The Czech Reader: History and Culture, Politics*, editors Jan Bažant, Nina Bažantová, and Frances Starn, (Durham: Duke University Press, 210), p. 262.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Cornwall, "Austria-Hungary and 'Yugoslavia,'" in *A Companion to World War I*, pp. 371-85.

<sup>36</sup> Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, p. 165.

<sup>37</sup> Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia*, p. 140.

<sup>38</sup> Paces, *Prague Panoramas*, pp. 78-81.

note and memorable. In January 1918, the three Bohemian Diets and the Czech members of the Austrian Reichsrat all called for establishment of a “sovereign state.” This message and vote carried weight, for the Czech industrial base and considerable population all made up a considerable portion of the empire itself. Once the Bolshevik Revolution occurred in Russia in November 1917, the Czech Legion captured the entirety of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and kept it out of communist hands for some time. This heroic move helped to convince the western allies that there would be a non-Bolshevik alternative to the Habsburgs if their empire fell.<sup>39</sup> Although a Czechoslovak National Committee emerged in Prague, allies still were in the habit of dealing with the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris. Between June 30 and September 3, 1917, Britain, France, and the United States all recognized that Council as the legitimate representative of the Czechoslovak people.<sup>40</sup> The eventual President Masaryk had also prepared the soil for the independence move, for he made plans from his base in Geneva and traveled extensively to work with émigrés and other key actors needed to support the state. In a sense, the events of October 28 were not really a big surprise but a natural outcome of a very long and well-planned process.

### *The Czech Legion as a Forge that Connected the Two Sets of Memories*

Czechs in the number of 100,000, either broke away from the Austrian Army or became Prisoners of War in Russia after their capture in World War I. Their forces fought in Russia (70,000), France (10,000), and Italy (20,000) on the allied side and became well-known through acts such as the victory at Zborov and their march through Siberia in possession of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. These activities during the Great War played a role in the founding of the Czechoslovak state, for allied leaders such as the American President Woodrow Wilson took note of their accomplishments and publicized in vocal ways the need for them to have a state of their own. Thus, the Legion in a way connected a portion of the war memories to one chapter of the memories about creation of the state.

Origins of the Legion were in several important organizations that were active in Bohemia and Moravia in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1862, the first Sokol appeared in Prague and had many imitators throughout the lands. Their main focus was physical fitness, but they also both published a journal and managed a library that emphasized the study of Czech history. In that sense, they aimed to create a “national mythology” that encouraged them to label their group the Czechoslovak National Army. The Young Czech Party emerged at the end of that century, and many of the Sokol members joined it as well. When the Habsburgs abolished the Sokol movement in 1915, many of its members joined the new Czechoslovak Legion. In August 1914, they formed a *Družina* that consisted of 720 volunteers. Those individuals received their flag in Kiev, and it initially showed the Russian tricolor on one side and the Bohemian crown of Svatý Václav on the other.

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<sup>39</sup> Taylor, *The Habsburg Empire*, 264-65.

<sup>40</sup> Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, p. 170.

Eventually they added coats of arms to each corner of the Bohemian side, and they included those of Bohemia, Slovakia, Silesia, and Moravia.<sup>41</sup> Hence, there was an inclusivity in the Czech Legion from its very beginnings.

Goals of the unit included assisting in the defeat of the Habsburg military, and they did this by aiding allied forces to the east in Russia, west in France, and south in Italy. Far more Czech soldiers adhered during the war to the Austrian side, and so there were points at which the Czechs fought against one another. For example, this was true at the Battle of Zborov, following which a few family members who had fought on opposite sides embraced one another in thankfulness for their survival. As the Legion was pulled deeper into Russia, goals also included making an impact on the Russian Civil War. They worked with Kerensky and the Russian Provisional Government after the overthrow of Tsar Nicholas II in March 1917, and then they took the side of the Whites after the Leninist Bolshevik Revolution of November of the same year. Through their take-over of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, the Legion slowed down the Bolshevik take-over of the country and gave the allies some breathing room in reacting to the radical transformation that was taking place in Russia. This was important, for Russia had been a key ally of the West before November 1917, but it became a neutral component in the war effort after the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Germans. Therefore, the objectives of the Czechoslovak Legion meshed with wartime efforts to prepare the soil for a series of independent states that would replace the four dominant empires that had dominated East Europe but whose destiny entailed collapse during World War I.

The march across Russia was significant to the allied war effort, for the Legion by itself in the end linked the battles further west all the way to the Pacific Ocean city of Vladivostok. Amazingly, the Legion controlled for a time 6,000 miles of territory from the Volga River to the Pacific Ocean. The numbers are impressive, for Legion infrastructure included control of 259 trains, 531 passenger coaches, and 10, 287 freight wagons.<sup>42</sup> Rudolf Medek was in Siberia at the time of these events, and he was both a Czech Legion General and poet. After hearing of the Legion victory at Zborov further west, he wrote a powerful poem in 1918, with the same name as the battle. He also composed a series of poems about the military activities of the Legion and its impact on World War I. Interestingly, the Zborov poem was published first in Chelyabinsk, Russia, then in Prague, and finally in other Siberian locations further east that accompanied the move of the Legion in that direction to the Pacific Ocean.

Another celebrant of the Legion was Antonín Horák with his 1918 poem “The Czech Legion.” The composer Leoš Janáček wrote a musical work in 1918, based on that poem and with the same name, that became a monumental symbol for the war effort, and it fed into the process of creating the state. The poem and music depict Czech Soldiers on the western front in France. They had taken part in a major victory and were marching into Paris on a historic road called “Chemin des Dames.”

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<sup>41</sup> Bullock, *The Czech Legion 1914-20*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

The poet overestimates the French greeting for dramatic effect, as he describes cannons and a million voices welcoming the soldiers from the Czech Legion. As the poet describes it, during the earlier battle the Czech soldiers received inspiration from their own Battle of White Mountain in 1620 and Battle of Marshfield in 1278. At one point the Czech forces are losing energy, but the bugle sounds to indicate the arrival of fresh forces from France. Overall, the Czechs are “rocks of granite,” and thus the poet finally instructs the “pilgrim” to convey greetings from Paris to those back home on the banks of the Vltava. Such a major work provided memories of the wartime effort that gave hope for the new and emerging state.

Certainly, the success of the Legion in the war helped to prod the allies to support hopes for a Czechoslovak state in the near future. American recognition of Masaryk’s Czechoslovak National Council occurred on September 3, 1918, a little less than two months before the actual founding of the state in Prague.<sup>43</sup> In a sense, the successes and notoriety of the Legionnaires broadened the Czech question and transformed it into a “European question” that made destruction of Austria more central to post-war planning.<sup>44</sup> Within the new state, it was expected that the members of the Legion would be useful after the war in guarding what might be porous borders. Their training and combat experience would be a unique contribution that would make Czechoslovakia more secure in the region.<sup>45</sup> However, the tendency to mythologize those former soldiers was excessive, for vastly more Czechs and Slovaks fought on the side of Austria-Hungary during the war. Those veterans did not gain much consideration back home, and that was of course true also of the German and Hungarian minorities.<sup>46</sup> Pension benefits and job opportunities were also more substantial for the members of the Czech Legion than they were for the other groups. However, it is clear that this special group of soldiers worked its way into memories both of the sacrifices during the war and the very existence of the new Czechoslovakia.

### Conclusion: Memory and Two Centennials in 2018

Any state is more than its Constitution or political and administrative institutions, for it also becomes a “symbolic reality” of the past experiences of its peoples, and this was surely true for Czechoslovakia in 1918. “Realms of memory” for its peoples included important events, personages, and even myths that stretched back over 1,000 years. The new state inherited all of that history, and that became either a burden or responsibility for those persons and groups that inhabited and led the new state. “Rememoration” of that past history was unavoidable and unconscious, for its high points such as the regime of Charles IV in the fourteenth century and low points such as the defeat at White Mountain in the seventeenth century would not disappear from the new state consciousness. As such, those

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<sup>43</sup> Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 266.

<sup>44</sup> Vladimír Nosek, *The Spirit of Bohemia: A Survey of Czechoslovak History, Music, and Literature*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1926), p. 203.

<sup>45</sup> Bullock, *The Czech Legion*, p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> Van Ypersele, “Mourning and Memory,” p. 557.

memories served as “mirrors” that would provide constant challenges for the new state to overcome the humiliations of the past as well as to make comparable accomplishments in the future.

The war itself transformed a “space of memory” of four large but decaying empires into an area that included a mix of new nation-states in the same geographic space. The wartime suffering had taken place either in the service of those empires or in opposition to them. The new political beginning within that space helped to make the sacrifices both more worthwhile and harnessed to the chance also for individual renewal. The war memories thus became “alloys” for construction of the new political institutions and broader frameworks of the new states. Physical memorials also appeared and became “symbolic sites” that encouraged visits that would nurture “rememoration” of the persons who had lost their lives in the war. The tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the city of Prague and the memorial to the Czechoslovak Legion on Vitkov Hill were two of the most prominent of those sites.

In the immediate post-war period, the Czechoslovak Legion served as a “trigger” that exploded into a rush of memories. Many of those memories were connected to its military achievements in Italy, France, and Russia. At the same time, both external and internal forces memorialized the Legionnaires in a way that cemented the foundation building blocks of the new state. It is thus possible to conclude that the Legion was one force that knit together memories of Czech sacrifices in the war with Czech hopes and plans for a successful new state. One century later, such memories are still vibrant and meaningful.

## Appendix A

### *The Dead (Otakar Theer)*

No longer do you ring the bells, no longer do you sound the songs,  
 No longer through that voice without the frowning clouds, in which  
 Happiness, from us earlier, smiles,  
 Flies up in our breast closer to the sun.  
 In a whirl it does not wait for the building up of love,  
 The fully tinkling sounds of future cups, for all of us,  
 As a quiet complaint and quiet reproach, for us the living,  
 Those who pass away, a sobbing voice.  
 (Translation by James W. Peterson)

## Appendix B

### *A Soldier in the Field (In: Vomáčka's 1914. Cyklus pěti písní s orchestrem)*

If I return home, I will go through our streets, I will go  
 Through our streets, slowly and quietly,  
 I will look over the little stairs, at all the windows,

Someone will talk, I will not answer!  
Then, however, I will see, then, however, I will see a strange thing.  
I will dry up with longing, when I see it, when I see it,  
I will say to it: home, my hearth, nest!  
At every step oh, I will dry up, it will be a battle, there will be  
Fighting.  
A beautiful woman will come to meet me, a beautiful woman will  
Come to meet me, into the deep green grass I fall.  
Into the deep grass ...  
If I will return home, I will sit with my wife and for three days  
I will not lower my eyes for her.  
At night I will sleep quietly with her.  
Morning is beautiful, oh, beautiful will be her hands on the quilt,  
I will tell her everything, everything, and I will read, and I will read.  
Then I will get up, I will lay flowers in the windows  
Under their leaves I will discover green, blessed life.  
I will be like a farmer and shepherd; that will be beautiful.  
I will not be a soldier, I will not be a soldier; that will be beautiful.  
That will be beautiful, beautiful!

## Images of *Shoah* and *Porajmos* in Contemporary Slovak Literature<sup>1</sup>

Jana Pátková

Soon after World War II ended, reflections on the war and depictions of universal humanity during the war became a traditional theme of Slovak literature. In the beginning, Slovak writers engaged in a one-sided thematization of the Slovak National Uprising but, surprisingly, as early as the 1950s, there is a thematic broadening, especially in the works of Alfonz Bednár and, later, in the novellas of Leopold Lahola. In comparison with other Central European literary traditions, which are formed by a similar historical circumstance, the treatment of Jewish themes in Slovak literature has a highly tendentious nature, as the theme of Shoah (or the Jewish Holocaust) and Jewish life during the Slovak Republic are almost absent in post-World War II literature. The phenomenon of Jewish literature as we know it from the Czech, Polish, and Hungarian literary traditions remained absent in Slovak literature. There is a conspicuous absence in the Slovak tradition of authors like Arnošt Lustig in Czech literature, Imre Kertész in Hungarian literature, or Henryk Grynberg in Polish literature. Slovak literary historiography about World War II focuses on a handful of key texts: *Posledná vec* (1968), *Obchod na korze* (1965), *Smrť sa volá Engelchen* (1959) and *Námästie svätej Alžbety* (1958).<sup>2</sup> For a long time, these texts formed almost the entirety<sup>3</sup> of the Slovak exploration of the Jewish experience and that of other minorities. The Roma *Porajmos*<sup>4</sup> (Roma Holocaust) did not, for various reasons, become the subject of Slovak fiction until 1989. The only exception is, again, Lahola's collection of prose *Posledná vec* with the novella *Fontetieri*. In the Slovak context, much like in the Czech context, the

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<sup>1</sup> The author thanks Ema Katrovas for assistance in translating this text into English.

<sup>2</sup> In an example of autointerpretative narrative, the Slovak author of Jewish descent, Leopold Lahola, wrote at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s several shorter prose pieces, which were published in 1968 under the title *Posledná vec*. A prized text, which is not afraid of exploring personal guilt, is the novel with Jewish themes *Obchod na korze* (1965) by the Slovak author with Jewish roots Ladislav Grossman. At the end of the 1950s, Ladislav Mňačko published an autobiographical novel *Smrť sa volá Engelchen* (1959) and Rudolf Jašík published the novel *Námästie svätej Alžbety* (1958). Jašík's novel draws on similarly tragic events as the novel of Czech author Jan Otčenášek, *Romeo, Julie a tma*, published in the same year. Both of them depict the relationship between a Czech or Slovak and a young Jewish woman, and both stories end tragically. What's unmistakable, however, is the ideological layer expressing the recent victory of socialism above antisemitism.

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of completeness, we should also mention the authors Vincent Šíkula, Ján Johanides and others, who wrote about Jews during the war in their novels published during the era of Normalization.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Hancock in his book *My rómsky národ* (Slovak version, 2005) explains: "In the Roma tongue, the Holocaust is called Baro Porrajmos, which means 'the great engulfment' of human life. Porrajmos is an ugly word fit to describe the ugliest era in our history." (*Original: V rómčine sa holokaust nazýva Baro Porrajmos, čiže 'veľké pohltienie' ľudských životov. Porrajmos je škaredé slovo, a dobre vystihuje najotrásnejšie obdobie našich dejín.*) Ian Hancock, *My rómsky národ*, (Bratislava: Petrus, 2005), p. 73.



Roma minority has been almost invisible to literary representation.<sup>5</sup> Literary texts by Roma authors written in the Romani language remained hidden to the mainstream reader because they were not translated. This was the case, too, with the post-World War II texts of the author Elena Lacková and their theatrical adaptations. It was not until the 1990s that mainstream readers were exposed to Elena Lacková's biography which was retold, and thus incorporated into the wider literary context, by Milena Hübschmannová. In the 1960s, Slavo Kalný revived interest in Roma folklore in his journalistic book *Cigánsky plač a smiech* (1960). Today, the theme of the social exclusion of the Roma ethnicity is part of the thematic paradigm of contemporary Slovak literature. It is connected to the works of the middle and younger generation of Slovak authors, like Vít'o Staviarsky, Tomáš Varga or Agda Bavi Pain.

In Slovak literature after the year 2000, we may witness an attempt to open a discussion around the issue of collective historical memory. Parallel to this, we see an emergence of the theme of the individual's role in large historical events. The basic post-revolutionary question remains, however: How does one tell stories centered on the traumas of the 20th century? The methods of approaching various fictional narratives<sup>6</sup> are quite diverse. The thematization itself of the lives of minority groups during the era of the Slovak Republic underwent, to varying degrees, a transformation after the Revolution of 1989 in terms of themes and genre and, inevitably, the quantity of particular, unfortunately mostly repetitive, fictional narratives dealing with the basic traumas of the 20th century. We may describe the transformation of genre as a shift to autobiographical, documentary, and quasi-documentary genres. In comparison with pre-1989 prose, it is apparent that the theme of war is subtly expanded, gaining more variety on several levels. The most apparent one is the ideo-thematic one, in which the totalitarian regime of the Slovak Republic is explicitly compared by Slovak authors to that of the similarly destructive Czechoslovak communist regime (like in the novels *Orodovnice* or *Dom hluchého*). Other than a few exceptions (among them memoirs by Ján Rozner and Elena Lacková), authors construct war narratives without having had their own experiences, that is, without really being personally in touch with the events of the war. Authors from every generation take part in depicting Shoah and Porajmos, be it the older generation (Ján Rozner, Elena Lacková, Ľudovít Didi) or the only slightly younger Milan Zelinka and Pavel Vilikovsky), the middle generation (Peter Pišťanek), or the youngest generation (Maroš Krajňak, Peter Krištúfek). Such a renewed interest among readers in the lives of minorities during the Second World War has the potential to bring to the forefront the issue of violence and insensitivity towards various social groups in general. This choice of subject matter inevitably reflects the mood of a society that, after the Revolution, began to open to the pluralistic view of historical wrongs and began to redefine its own guilt. In the post-revolutionary era we may primarily notice a development in the non-fictional

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<sup>5</sup> We may also include the novel with a different ethos *Husle s labutím krkom* (1979) by Július Balco.

<sup>6</sup> See terminology of fictional and historical narratives in the theories of Lubomír Doležal.

treatments (memoirs, autobiographies) and outside of the artistic sphere (in academic discourse), because, understandably, the discussion around the Holocaust of the Jews and Roma in particular, and the issue of minorities in general, was opened after 1989 in a whole number of academic fields. In literature, this discourse primarily began after the year 2000 (except, perhaps, for the autobiography of Elena Lacková or memoirs and autobiographies from the 1990s).<sup>7</sup>

## Shoah in Memory

In the context of contemporary Slovak literature, the prose of Ján Rozner is an example of autobiographical work which uses a non-narrative, fragmentary, layering of images, akin to the diverse forms of our memory. The autobiographical character and the power of this imperative testimony are close, typologically, to the memoirs of the Roma author Elena Lacková,<sup>8</sup> who also reflects on her childhood and youth. However, the two bodies of work are more different than similar. Unlike Lacková, Ján Rozner's attitude towards his past is that of ironic remove, which allows him to capture the absurdity of the time. In his prose piece *Noc po fronte* (2010), the author returns, through memories, to his youth (both childhood and adolescence)<sup>9</sup> and realizes all the consequences of being a Jew in Central Europe at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s. Through his depiction of Jews during the war he explains how invasive "large scale history" can be in the lives of ordinary people. He thus becomes a narrator in an auto-interpretive position. In the introductory chapter "Matka," he explains that he is reconstructing memory, which has an effect on the reliability of the narrative and its final shape. In the last chapters, "Slovenský štát", "Sered" and "Deň po fronte", the author returns to the situation of Jews during the Slovak Republic and to the second half of 1944 when, as a half-Jew, he was deported along with his brother and mother to the concentration camp in Sered. He sees history from the point of view of an individual who found himself on the border between life and death, both during the war and right after it when Germans and Hungarians were forced out of Bratislava. Because of their German background, Rozner and his family were once again in danger after the war. The chapter "Deň po fronte" captures the situation after his return. The surviving Jews return to their homes which have already been occupied by Slovaks. Rozner formulates the setting of his return with an overall ironic remove. His view of history is determined by his own maturation, the transition from youth to adulthood, when the character realizes that his or her worldview is being formed; it is also apparent, however, that the text

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<sup>7</sup> E.g., Juraj Špitzer: *Nechcel som byť Žid* from the year 1994 and others.

<sup>8</sup> In both texts, we may follow a similar editing of the final version of the text, be it in the case of Ján Rozner (prepared for publication by his wife Slávka Roznerová) or Elena Lacková (prepared for publication by Czech Roma studies expert Milena Hübschmannová).

<sup>9</sup> Sláva Roznerová selected parts of Rozner's legacy and prepared them for publication. The time frame of the fragmentary storytelling of the book is therefore her doing. We may see an example of it in his last novel *Výlet na Devín* (2011), in which the author captures the time of his childhood. He thus expands his depiction of Bratislava and the surrounding area to include the pre-war era, when anti-Semitic sentiments were growing.

is affected by the author's other life experience, his sobering from the totalitarian communist ideology of the 50s. Together with the historical narrative which speaks for itself, these texts—written with irony and total remove—capture, first and foremost, the author's own search for his world view, which ends right after the war with Rozner's anchoring as a cultural publicist in left-oriented magazines.

Pavel Vilikovský works with memory in his prose as well. In almost all of his texts, however, his storytelling mode is saturated with an ironic layer which puts into question the authenticity and truth of memories in relation to large-scale history. The questioning of veracity in the novella *Štvrtá reč* from the book *Prvá a posledná láska* (2013) has multiple aspects. One of them is the reflection of the memories of an aging correspondent, who in his mind returns to, among other things, the Jewish Holocaust, the transport from the Patrónka in Bratislava. The seemingly unequivocal testimony is interrupted and layered with a complicated narrative situation, which weakens the unbearable tragedy and speaks to the impossibility of mediating the experience of war to others. Next to the author's "we" voice, which knowingly incorporates us, the readers, the retiree Gabriel appears in the text as an oral historian along with his respondents, who give a raw account of the Holocaust (and in a broader context of the traumas of the 20th century) in the form of oral histories. The author knowingly inserts a specific form of testimony into the storytelling in the form of oral histories because it is in this form that the roles of the individual in history become relevant. Another layer of text turned towards 20th century history are citations from Sönke Neitzel's *Odpočúvaní*, which consists of the questionings of German officers imprisoned in Britain after the war. The value of this testimony is, again, reduced by the reader's attention being drawn to the unimportant, or even the lowly, in relation to the tragic depiction of the crimes associated with the Holocaust. The border between fiction and authentic testimonies is very nuanced and is lost in what is explicitly called "letters on paper" in the text. It isn't a case of substitution, however, where the storyteller concentrates on the unimportant, secondary, occurrences and remains silent on the core of the matter. Silence is thematized on a different level, here. Vilikovský opens the theme of silence in the very motto of the novella: "Pressburg was a trilingual city. The fourth language was silence. Tuvia Rübner."<sup>10</sup> The leitmotiv of the novella is the question which the character of Gabriel asks himself in relation to, among other events, the Holocaust and the transports from Patrónka in Bratislava to Auschwitz: How was all this possible? It is silence that answers him, the silence mentioned by the narrator at the end of the novella: "(...) a story is just letters on paper. An invention, in English, 'fiction.' Gabriel doesn't exist, he is just a code name for a certain kind of timidity. But the silence, dear reader, the silence is real."<sup>11</sup> The author thus turns our attention to the motive of silence and the adequacy of its depiction within a text. Vilikovský attains the greatest power in

<sup>10</sup> Pavel Vilikovský, "Štvrtá reč," *Prvá a posledná láska*, (Bratislava: Slovart, 2013), p. 137. (Original: "Pressburg bol trojrečové mesto. Štvrtou rečou je mlčanie. Tuvia Rübner.")

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 197. (Original: "(...) poviedka sú písmenká na papieri. Výmysel, po anglicky fiction. Gabriel nejestvuje, je to len krycí názov pre istý druh ostychu. Ale to mlčanie, milý čitateľ, milá čitateľka, to mlčanie je skutočné.")

so-called extratextual components of artistic expression, in which the silence of an old man, who is unable to speak of the horrors he lived, is at the center of the testimony about Soviet work camps. The way in which Vilikovský shows the relation between the individual and history is one of the ways one may depict this relationship without pathos, naiveté, or the use of stereotypes associated with particular historical events.

If Pavel Vilikovský's novella stays deliberately silent on the horrors of war and turns our attention away towards the insignificant, because the reality would be too cruel if revealed completely, then Peter Krištúfek's novel *Dom hluchého* (2012), on the contrary, overly explains itself. The author dedicates about one-hundred pages, which is about half of the first part, to events in which he tackles the realities of the Second World War with the openness and exactitude of a history teacher. In an utterly conventional way, he places the biographical story of Alfonz Trnovský from the fictional town of Brežany into the realistic framework of the story. Alfonz Trnovský dies at the beginning of the book as a respected doctor and citizen of the small town of Brežany. His seemingly contented life is exposed on the backdrop of the traumas of the 20th century (the comings and goings of political regimes, the Jewish question during the Slovak Republic, the fabricated political trials of the 50s, and collaboration with the Slovak secret police) as that of a collaborator and hypocrite. His son Adam takes charge of the storytelling upon his father's death when the selling of their family house causes him to reflect and search for his father's true life story. The history of Slovakia emerges before the reader in all its factuality, reinterpreted too many times to count. Adam Trnovský is about to sell his parent's house. This literary trope is usually associated with the process of remembering. Krištúfek does not depart in any way from the standard framework of the given subject matter as he takes his characters through the entirety of the 20th century. In relation to World War II, he focuses on a basic narrative paradigm, which we already had the possibility to encounter in pre-1989 prose. He dramatizes, first and foremost, basic narrative schemes like the depiction of life in Jewish communities before the transports, proving of Aryan origin, the Aryanization of a close relative's property, help for Jewish relatives, and the transports. The author cites a number of historical documents which are testimonies to his primary desire to write about history. His version of history is mediated by a direct narrator, the son of the family doctor Alfonz Trnovský, who, luckily, realizes the limits and unreliability of his memories. This is connected to a certain degree of predictability which affects the text on many levels. Alfonz Trnovský is depicted as an individual who broke under the pressure of history. For instance, after turning in his uncle Armin, who is unexpectedly forced into a transport, the reader may predict that he will sign an agreement with the state security police (StB) and so on. The author mostly concentrated on a fictional depiction of history, but Krištúfek's history has an undeniably factual basis.

Peter Krištúfek continues thematizing key historical events in his next book, the novella *Ema a Smrtihlav* (2014), which is set against the realistic backdrop of Bratislava during the Second World War. Contemporary prose treatments of the Holocaust mostly continue in the vein of existing depictions of this era, in the

tradition of so-called traumatized literature of the pre-revolutionary era. Sometimes they lean more towards the authentication of the real world, other times they prefer a more lyric approach. The given continuum between authenticity and stylization is apparent in the works of Peter Krišťufek, who progresses from the realistic prose of *Dom hluchého* to the lyrical treatment of the theme in *Ema a Smrťhlav*. In his narrative strategy, history emerges in the form of concise mentions of particular temporal landmarks within one of the key traumas in Slovak history. The author inserts a note to the reader before the story itself, in which he emphasizes the fictionality of the text which should not be interchanged with a historical narrative: "This book is a fiction which more or less reflects the real world."<sup>12</sup> This raises the question of why the author feels the need to emphasize this very fictionality to his readers at the expense of its factuality. The author describes his novel *Dom hluchého* as his most realistic work and *Ema a Smrťhlav* is thus a highly stylized counterpoint to this novel. It is also the case, however, that if the author opens his book with such a statement, he wishes to demonstrate the relativity of authentic testimony. If we take into consideration that history is currently only part of those fictional worlds in literature that are depicted as physically possible and realistic,<sup>13</sup> then Krišťufek has crossed the threshold of the current possibility of depicting historical subject matter. Specifically, he combines a fantastical story with a realistic one in such a way as to place the unrealistic and fantastical into the realm of children's dreaming. The story told from the perspective of a child leans on the well-known and often-used trope of the mixed marriage. The father, a Czech, must return to the Protectorate while the mother, a Jew, hides with their younger son with acquaintances until the end of the war and the older son, Šimon, is hidden for two years beyond the Bratislava boarder, in Podunajské Biskupice, with nanny Marika. The basic subject of the story is the long wait in hiding not far from Bratislava in the nationally distinctive Hungarian and German town of Biskupice. The story moves from that of little Šimon, who finds himself close to death, to a dream-like (hallucinogenic) world. The dream-like reflection of a dangerous situation expresses the threat of revealing Šimon's hiding-place. The author centers the book on the dream-like plotline about Ema, whom little Šimon must save from the general Death's-Head. The perspective of an unknowing child, with its spontaneity and fantasticalness, creates a contrast of meaning to the horrors of Shoah, which the reader is intensely aware of.

Krišťufek utilized the setting of hiding from the threat of deportation to depict the life of Jews during the war. In the context of literary representations of Shoah, this is a typologically well-known subject-matter. Thematically, the book represents the return to an era which we have already reflected upon, yet it brings a new dimension in terms of its shape. In it, history no longer emerges from the story in a transparent fashion; while here, too, history is presented through documentary materials, these materials are commercials, magazine quotes, and songs of the time.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Krišťufek, *Ema a Smrťhlav* (Bratislava: Artforum, 2014), p. 5. (Original: "Táto kniha je fikcia, ktorá viac či menej odráža skutočný svet.")

<sup>13</sup> See Lubomír Doležel, *Fikce a historie v období postmoderny*, (Prague: Academia, 2008).

Peter Krišťufek serves us a civilian account of the suffering of Jews during the war without eschatological overreach. This aspect of the text has a marked effect on shaping the representation of a child's dream, in which the author chooses not to lean primarily on the biblical pretexts of heaven and hell but chooses to work instead with the mundane. He juxtaposes the language of the Bible with that of commercials from colorful magazines of the time, which help the child protagonist understand his surrounding world or, rather, help overwrite the unbearably tragic heft of reality. In such juxtaposition to biblical heaven and hell, the image of Death's-Head emerges in Šimon's mind as the image of hell and Ema sunbathing in a yellow swimsuit becomes his civilian idea of heaven. The real world overlaps in the text with the fantastical world of a child's imagination. The contrast between the two has several levels in the text, like the gray reality represented by the closed space of the cowshed brushing up against the imaginative freedom of Šimon's thoughts. The colorful world of Šimon's mind gradually blends with reality to such an extent, that the border between them is difficult for Šimon to recognize. The text draws us away from the dramatic focus of Šimon's experience. While the author does present a traditional story of survival, which defines literature about Shoah, or so-called traumatized literature, the text likely reaches beyond the scope of war, until, in the context of other totalitarian regimes, nanny Marika's self-sacrifice is cast in a tragically different light and the author underlines her role as a victim. If the author moved the focus of the text to nanny Marika, Šimon would become a secondary figure and the emphasis of the text would move to a different historical epoch. In this way, Šimon's story does not initiate a universal testimony about the evil of individuals and the wielding of power. The author's intention unwittingly deviates from the tropes of so-called traumatized literature. The reader experiences the text as the story of the solidarity between ordinary people. This is due to the fact, in part, that the characters' specific situation leans on the psychological rather than historical, which, without deeper accenting of the symbols of the Jewish fate, represents a mere attempt at an aesthetic update.

Milan Zelinka, too, in his prose *Teta Anula* (2007), touches on one of the most tragic historical traumas of Central Europe when, in the 11th chapter of the book, he depicts the deportation of Jews to concentration camps. The historical reach of the fictional novella is facilitated by the memoir-like feel of the text narrated through the eyes of another child protagonist, a fourteen-year-old boy. The child observer and narrator looks up to aunt Anula with awe, depicting her as a strong but also harmonizing figure in the difficult time of war and, later, after the war. The character of aunt Anula never loses her moral credit during the key years of the protagonist's development.

A central image is the deportation of Jews, which happens too far in the past to be experienced through the child narrator's eyes which is why, in the text, the child narrator is replaced by the author's narration. The inserted episode about the deportation of Jews serves primarily to show the character of aunt Anula, who, with naive determination, attempts to prevent the deportation of her closest friend. The moving goodbye of the two little girls contrasts with the unusually adult view of the entire situation, in which Anula morally exceeds the arriving guardsmen. The goats

that Anula continues to care for remain a symbol of her relationship to Jews. Their meaning is revealed in the closing passages when the goats die natural deaths. The story is set in the Trnava region (Western Slovakia), which invites the differentiation of the individual voices of the text. While the author-narrator of the 11th chapter (in other chapters, the 1st person direct narrator prevails) speaks in standard Slovak, the voices of individual characters are meticulously differentiated: the author combines dialects and standard uses of foreign languages, like for the guardsman who, along with a dialect of Slovak, speak in standard Hungarian. The use of multiple languages heightens the authenticity of the historical narrative.

The last prose pieces of Jana Juráňová are an example of a less typical depiction of the relationship between the individual, history and historical memory. In the poetologically different novels *Orodovnice* (2006) and *Nevybavená záležitosť* (2013), the author connects, against the backdrop of intertwining plot lines, the personal memory of the characters with historical memory, which remains buried somewhere in the minds of the concrete characters (*Nevybavená záležitosť*), or transforms (in the case of *Orodovnice*) into what Peter Zajac called historical stereotype.<sup>14</sup> The unusualness of her depiction of the Jewish experience lies in the unmistakably feminist dimension of the text, which is pushed to the forefront in Juráňová's novels, covering up the historical events of the text. Juráňová depicts the traumas of the 20th century through the female gaze and female experience. She thus continues her project of depicting the fates of women against the backdrop of key historical moments.

The story of the novel *Orodovnice* is set in the present but the past emerges in the text in the form of the mother's memories of her dead husband, which were never meant to be uttered out loud. Jana Juráňová's novel tells the story of four women (Ružena, Zdenka, Elenka and the mother) and their fates told on the background of their deficient and unstable relationships with men, be it family or romantic ones. At the same time, it's impossible to overlook the four differing points of view, which the author presents to the reader in four chapters. Ružena is an unassertive woman who remained alone with a child. Zdenka entered the convent and her identity is conflicted between her family roots (Zdenka) and her new life which began with her entering the convent and taking upon herself the religious

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<sup>14</sup> "The story of the father, son, and uncle became a backdrop. Yet in her masculine storyline Juráňová, in a sense, repeats the engrained conviction, that every Slovak family included at least one Nazi and one communist. This historical stereotype (which is not just Slovak) is defined by the motto "we have to help each other" as this is the only way to erase from memory that perhaps someone turned someone else in - one a Jew, the other a neighbor." (Original: "Príbehy otca, syna a strýka sa stali kulisou na pozadí. Juráňová pritom v podstate svojím mužským príbehom tematicky opakuje zavedené presvedčenie, že v každej slovenskej rodine bol pre istotu aspoň jeden ľudák a komunista. Tento historický stereotyp (a nielen slovenský) sa riadi heslom musíme si pomáhať. Len tak možno vymazať z pamäti, že prípadne niekto niekoho aj poudával - jeden žida, druhý suseda.") Peter Zajac, "Litánie za stratené v húfe stratených," *ASPEKTin - feministický webzín*, November 13, 2007. Accessed May 20, 2015. <[http://www.aspekt.sk/aspekt\\_in.php?content=clanok&rubrika=30&ID\\_clanok=355](http://www.aspekt.sk/aspekt_in.php?content=clanok&rubrika=30&ID_clanok=355)>

name Klára. Elenka, the wife of their brother who has a successful diplomatic career, opens the conflict of the text. The mother tries to fulfill as best she can her role as a mother and wife. The male counterparts are the father and uncle, who represent differing views of the history of the 20th century: the fascist and the communist. The female protagonists, who are all looking for their identity, are connected through a deep dissatisfaction with how invasively large-scale historical events have entered their lives. Each one searches for a path towards herself through a different view of the world and different perception of her role within that world.

In *Orodovnice*, the author knowingly works on the one hand with the stereotype of the image of Jews, the way they were depicted as early as 19th century literature, like when one of her characters translates her mother's statement to the media: "That Jews have always been thieves and swindlers. That's exactly how she put it."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, her depiction of historical events, which is to say the reality of the Slovak Republic, does not deviate in any way from preceding fictionalizations and thus contributes to the conservation of the given image, the support of historical stereotypes, as Peter Zajac pointed out. Historical events serve for Juraňová as backdrops for filling in dysfunctional social and family roles of the female protagonists. It is the male protagonists who are connected within her work with fascism and communism. The father's active participation during the war in the practices of the Slovak Republic is a family taboo. Besides the usual narrative paradigms, like the deportation of Jews, the image of the concentration camps, Aryanization, the existence of the Slovak Republic, the author also utilizes the motive of the father's unsuccessful attempt to emigrate to Argentina. The father's past affects the family long after the war has ended, even long after his death. The way in which the author views history in her novel *Orodovnice* is by connecting two totalitarian systems of the 20th century, the fascist regime (the father's past) and the communist totalitarian regime (the uncle's past). Both totalitarian regimes, as depicted in Juraňová's novels, have a very destructive, and within the family self-destructive, function.

The author creates a similar narrative paradigm in her novel *Nevybavená záležitosť*, though with much more sensitivity when it comes to connecting history to the present of the novel. The novel leans on two different levels of storytelling, which enter into an important union on the level of the timeline of the present. The first timeline is represented by Zita who, after her husband's sudden death, moves to a house she always dreamed of living in in the countryside, where she learns to live alone again and with others rural folk. This situation makes room for the activation of her memory (memories of her mother, her childhood, a fulfilling marriage). The second plotline is the story of the painting of an, at first unknown, Jewish woman found in the attic of the country house Zita moved into. The painting forgotten in the attic is symptomatic of, and it's story an epic symbol for, the stashed away (forgotten) historical memory not only of the residents of a particular town but also to what we might call the historical memory of the cultural landscape (a

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<sup>15</sup> Jana Juraňová, *Orodovnice* (Bratislava: Aspekt, 2006), p. 42. (Original: "Že Židia boli odjakživa kmíni a podvodníci. Presne tak to povedala.")



graveyard showing the names of dead war heroes, the public spaces of the town, where Jews used to live.) The gradual identification of the painting of a particular woman helps awaken even this hidden memory which, in the text, is also confronted with a personal history which is, once again, that of a woman, namely the aging Zita. The literary representation of memory has a traumatizing aspect in the novel, closely linked with the thematization of Shoah. Historical memory within the text is present through a story with a secret, which is gradually revealed and reconstructed. The image of an, at first, unknown woman becomes the image of Edita, later Edita Zöllnerová, and then the concrete Jewess Edita Zöllnerová shot before the end of the war. The author repeats the key narratives of the depiction of war: the deportation of Jews, Aryanization, the Slovak Republic, testimonials about death, the image of “decent” Slovaks looting Jewish houses. The only aspect that changes is the way the traumatic experience is depicted. The individual historical paradigms are presented in the form of discovered fragments of a diary and the surviving correspondence between the woman from the painting and her female friends as well as the artist who painted her. In this plotline, the author uses the narrative of the reconstructed story of Edita Zöllnerová, which synecdochally speaks for and represents, or literally substitutes, a broad, and in its entirety ungraspable, historical reality, but at the same time constructs Edita as strictly fictional, only set within the past. This can't be changed even with the use of objective materials of the time which become the subject of fictionalization, like the newspaper clippings, which randomly fall out from the aforementioned diary (for example a quote from the magazine *Gardista* from March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1940). The documentary materials, together with the personal documents (diaries, correspondences), help reconstruct the image and life of a woman who died prematurely in a concentration camp in Hungary. While historical memory is explicitly confronted with the fate of a particular woman living in the present, the fictional narrative blends with the historical one, though even this important aspect of the text is covered by a layer of feminism, though not as explicit as that of the novel *Orodovnice*. Juráňová answers the question of how to tell stories of the traumas of the 20th century through a conscious revitalization of historical memory. It is simply necessary to add to every one of her stories that women, too, took part in large historical events.

### **Porajmos in the Memories of Roma Authors**

The year 1997 saw the publication of a Czech edition (translated by Milena Hübschmannová) of the memoirs of author Elena Lacková (1921–2003). From a formal standpoint, this was a book of direct memories, personal ones (of childhood and youth, romantic relationships, and finding one's place in mainstream society) as well as ones of trauma (images of the degrading life of Roma during the First Republic, the persecution of Roma during the Slovak Republic, thematization of Porajmos and the post-war totalitarian communist reality). The author's memories encompass, in just eight chapters, almost the entire 20th century, consistently from the perspective of the Romani people. In the fourth chapter, the author

chronologically arrives in her memories of the Second World War and thus, through her own experience, depicts the suffering of Roma during this time.<sup>16</sup> The value of her testimony is heightened through the auto-interpretive position of the narrator<sup>17</sup> through which Elena Lacková, as a Roma author, depicts the life of her own ethnicity. She deliberately fights for the preservation of Roma identity through its traditions and its folklore, which represent a different view of the surrounding world. The experience of the Roma with persecution during the war presents, first and foremost, the opportunity for Lacková to depict the Roma mentality, the way they think, which to members of mainstream society (represented in her storytelling mainly by farmers) is incomprehensible in its magicalness and folkloric distinctness but also its pride and merciful childishness. The confrontation of the Roma settlements with events of the Second World War represented, for the members of these settlements, as yet unprecedented physical and psychological torture and degradation. The author focuses on capturing the systematic persecution of Roma, even working with factographic materials by mentioning exact public regulations which affected the lives and free movement of Roma during the war. Among the repeated images of the persecution of Roma, Lacková includes beatings at police stations, cutting the hair of the residents of Roma settlements, running Roma into cold rivers, a regulation against Roma setting foot in cities and villages, the definitive closing and cutting off of Roma settlements from the rest of society and, finally, deportation to labor and concentration camps. In contrast with these persecutions, the Roma ethnicity is depicted as the unequivocal bearer of nothing but positive characteristics. While, in the context of the memoir, this depiction of Roma is not surprising and does not disturb the aesthetic quality of the text, since the reader anticipates<sup>18</sup> that the narrator will view her own ethnicity through its rich inner life, in her fiction, which transfers the exact same motives into a different genre - namely the book of short stories *Mrtvi sa nevracajú* (2005) - this depiction

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<sup>16</sup> The author expanded upon her successful theater play, which also depicts Porajmos: *Horiaci cigánsky tábor* (1946).

<sup>17</sup> Elena Lacková often refers to the Roma ethnicity as “our people” (“naši lidé”).

<sup>18</sup> “Guardsmen tore into the settlement. They were as many as ravens. Among them policemen with rifles and bayonets. They ran us out of our houses. ‘Get up! March out, you Gypsy ragtag!’ It was November, snow drifted around the icy air. The police commander announced to our father that according to this and that law the Gypsy element wouldn’t be suffered close to upstanding citizens and must therefore move out of the proximity of towns and public roads to remote areas, so as not to spread disease and inspire indignation. The responsible authorities designated for us a place in Korpáš. This was a forest on a hill about two kilometers out of the village.” (Original: “Do osady vtrhli gardisté. Bylo jich jako havranů. Mezi nimi četníci s puškami a bajonety. Vyháněli nás z domků. ‘Vstávat! Marš ven, holoto cigánská!’ Byl listopad, v ledovém větru poletoval sníh. Velitel četníků oznámil našemu tatínkovi, že podle zákona toho a toho nebude cikánský živel trpěn mezi řádným občanstvem a musí se vystěhovat z blízkosti obcí a veřejných cest do odlehlých míst, aby nešířil nákazu a nebudil pohoršení. Pro nás určily příslušné orgány místo na Korpáši. Korpáš byl zalesněný kopec asi dva kilometry od městečka.”) Elena Lacková, *Narodila jsem se pod šťastnou hvězdou. Podle vyprávění autorky zpracovala, do češtiny přeložila a předmluvu napsala Milena Hübschmannová*, (Prague: Triáda, 2010), p. 127.

of Roma is not convincing and weakens the aesthetic value of the text.<sup>19</sup> In her short stories, the author focuses on the basic theme of the persecution of Roma during the Slovak Republic in the years 1939–1945. She uses a number of motives from her autobiographical work and transforms them into a new framework: for instance, the motive of the destruction of the Roma settlement by guardsmen, the motive of the bullying of Roma (cutting their hair, running them into cold rivers), the motive of restrictive regulations, like those banning Roma from villages and cities, the motive of the deportation of Roma into labor camps, their escapes etc. Lacková does not project herself into the story and shifts the perspective from a first-person narrator to a third-person omniscient one, with its epic remove. Her supposedly extradiegetic storytelling becomes involved in the story through its empathy with the Roma characters, concretely through depicting the characteristics of the Roma and their magical world. The narrative voice of Elena Lacková's short stories has the explicit tendency to explain and over-tell: "After all, she didn't know, back then, that Gypsies in their settlements are really prisoners."<sup>20</sup> Especially the end of the collection, with its epic remove on the development of the subject matter, testifies to the personal interest of the narrator to support the moral value of the text. The stories of Elena Lacková pose an unusual situation, in which the atypical and oft-ignored theme of the Roma Porajmos (Holocaust) could make her stories an important contribution to the development of the thematic structure of a particular vein of post-revolution literature, but because of their low aesthetic value her texts are almost invisible in contemporary Slovak literature. That said, it's clear that her memoir *Narodila jsem se pod šťastnou hvězdou* deserves attention.

Another Roma author, who is known for having signed the Charter 77, Ľudovít Didi (1931–2013) preferred, in terms of form, an entirely different narrative situation in his novel *Róm Tardek a jeho osud* (2013). The novel about Tardek

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<sup>19</sup> What is clear is the shift in the voice of the narrator from autobiographical storytelling to direct dialogue, exemplified at the end of the cited passage: "The large commissioner, fattened as a pig, opened his eyes wide as fists and announced: 'In the name of the Slovak law you have been banned from society! That is why I order you to tear down these huts and move out within three days. You're to clear these grounds such that not so much as a whiff of stink is left behind!' Everyone looked at each other, uncomprehending. The leader of the guardsmen filled him in: 'You'll move into the forest, over on that steep hill over there. You'll burn down the shrubbery and thistle and you'll build your huts there! That is the law!' (...) 'Mr. Commissioner, winter is coming, we're naked, we'll freeze, perish. *Have mercy, we're people, after all!*' (emphasis by J.P.) (...) (Original: "Tlustý komisař, vykrměný jako vepř, rozevřel oči jako pěsti a prohlásil: 'Ve jménu slovenského zákona jste vyřazeni ze společnosti! Proto vám nařizuji: do tří dnů tyto chatrče zbouřáte a z osady se vystěhujete. Toto prostranství vyklidíte, aby po vás ani smrad nezůstal!' Všichni se nechápavě a zmateně dívali jeden na druhého. Velitel gardy komisaře doplnil: 'Odstěhujete se do lesa, tam na ten strmý kopec. Keře a bodláčí spálíte a tam si potom postavíte chatrče! To je zákon!' (...) 'Pane komisaři, zima se blíží, jsme nahé, pomrzeme zahyneme. *Slítnete se, vždyť my jsme lidé!*' (...)'" Elena Lacková, *Holocaust Romů v povídkách Eleny Lackové*, (Praha: Fortuna, 2001), 18.

<sup>20</sup> Lacková, *Holocaust Romů*, p. 52. (Original: "Vždyť tehdy nevěděla, že Cikáni v osadách jsou vlastně vězni.")

encompasses the era between the end of World War II and the beginning of the communist regime. His story is told by an extradiegetic narrator, who maintains his remove from the story. The opening chapter of the book depicts the escape of Tardek the Roma from Poland to Slovakia, where he settles with his wife and child for good. The epic treatment of the text does not rely on the traditional narratives of depicting the war, like the persecution of Roma or their deportation into labor and concentration camps. Its portrayal of the war captures only the rejecting attitude of mainstream society to a particular minority. The author constructs the protagonist, Tardek, in a rather nontraditional way, as a negative representative of the Roma ethnicity. He develops his negative profile from the very first chapter, when Tardek meets with Germans and members of Hlinka's guard. The attitude of the German soldiers towards the Roma is not as negative in the novel as the attitude of the guardsmen. Ľudovít Didi depicts the distaste of majority society through well-used stereotypes, which accumulate in the guardsmen's dialogue: "No Gypsy will ever live in our village! There was one here, supposedly, but he was useful, because he was a blacksmith. (...) When they died, we tore down their hut and since then their kind doesn't obstruct or stink here. So go, and put them in their place!"<sup>21</sup> The author presents Tardek as a character capable of finding the key to his own success in any kind of totalitarian regime, be it the fascist ideology in the opening chapter or the communist one in the era of socialism covered in the subsequent chapters. The author does not present Tardek's opportunism, his strong desire to survive, and his ability to do so under any regime, as a trait of Roma identity, but uses it as a characteristic and individual trait of the main character. The author works with the psychological portrait of the character, which he depicts in all its contradictions. On the one hand, Tardek wants to support his family, but in order to accomplish this he doesn't balk at resorting to theft or murder. Dobrota Pucherová says about Didi's story that "the Roma Tardek and his fate is a story with a straightforward Christian message and its explicit didacticism slightly takes away from its quality in comparison to the author's earlier works."<sup>22</sup> The many secondary plotlines of the book all involve the character of Tardek, who, in the end, is overcome by his conscience.

The fate of Roma during the war is also touched upon in the prose works of the aforementioned authors Ján Rozner and Jana Juránová. Ján Rozner speaks shortly but expressively about the Roma fate, whose tragic circumstance he puts on par with that of the Jews. Jana Juránová in her novel *Nevybavená záležitosť* awakens again the image of the (female!) "Hermína the Gypsy," who is mentioned in the

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<sup>21</sup> Ľudovít Didi, *Róm Tardek a jeho osud*, (Bratislava: Slovart, 2013), p. 35. (Original: "V našej obci nikdy žiadny Cigán žiť nebude. Vraj tu jeden kedysi býval, ale ten bol osožný, lebo bol kováč. (...) Keď umreli, ich chajdu sme zvalili a odvtedy nám tu to plemeno nezavadzia a nesmrďí. Preto bežte a urobte s nimi poriadok!")

<sup>22</sup> Dobrota Pucherová, "Posledný román rómskeho Kukučina. Nad knihou Ľudovíta Didiho Róm Tardek a jeho osud," *Romboid: literatúra/umelecká komunikácia*, No. 4 (2014): 54. (Original: "Róm Tardek a jeho osud morálnym príbehom s priamočiarym kresťanským posolstvom a jeho explicitný didakticismus mu trochu uberá na kvalite oproti skorším autorovým prózam.")

writings found along with the painting of the Jewess Edita Zöllnerová in the attic. The depiction of the Roma woman is depicted in the vein of the stereotypical image of the Roma as constructed by mainstream society:

“I met old Hermína the Gypsy later that same year. She cried, asking about Mrs. Edita, (...) She told me that the lady sometimes gave her some dresses for her daughters and even work. Hermína would bring strawberries, raspberries, from the forest. I didn’t even understand everything she was saying, because she was wailing. I just stared at her as she began to tear out her hair.”<sup>23</sup>

Given the fact that, within the fictional text, this is the projection of an eighty-year-old woman, the given depiction has its justification. It does not, however, delve any deeper into the fate of Roma during the war. However, we may see these mentions of the Roma in the texts of non-Roma authors as testimony to the fact that the Roma minority is no longer entirely invisible to literature or depicted as a social group which is thematically interesting only as an object used to illustrate social stratification.

## Conclusion

As Vladimír Barborík noted about historical narratives: “It is not so much about saying something new (for that you would need to recognize what had already been said) but about forgetting what has already been said and ‘discovering’ the subject anew.”<sup>24</sup> It is clear that telling stories set against the backdrop of war means pushing this primary theme into forms of dramatization, like focusing on the problematic nature of the narrative situation, or, on the thematic and idea level, shifting the basic images into different levels of communication, like by juxtaposing them with other key traumas of the 20th century. The temporal remove from the war is reflected today in the specific role of the narrator, who approaches the images of war from the position of proclaimed epic remove. In the case of fiction, detailed work with facts and documents of the time enrich the fictional story with a historical scope. The treatment of the theme of Shoah and Porajmos is, at its root, quite diverse, on the one hand continuing to support historical stereotypes firmly rooted in the mentality of the Slovak nation, on the other hand, at least in particular cases, offering new connections and new interpretations of historical events.

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<sup>23</sup> Jana Juráňová, *Nevybavená záležitosť*, (Bratislava: Aspekt, 2013), pp. 143–144. (Original: “Potom som ešte v tom istom roku stretla starú Cigánku Hermínu. Plakala, pýtala sa ma na pani Editu, (...) Povedala mi, že jej pani občas dala nejaké šaty pre jej dcéry a aj zarobiť. Hermína jej nosila z lesa jahody, maliny, všetko som jej ani nerozumela, lebo strašne skuvíňala. Len som sa na ňu dívala a ona si začala trhať vlasy.”)

<sup>24</sup> Vladimír Barborík, “Ľudia prekrytí dejinami,” *Romboid: literatúra/umelecká komunikácia*, Ed. 48, No. 4 (2013): 43. (Original: “Nejde ani tak o to povedať niečo nové (na to je potrebné poznať, čo už povedané bolo), ale zabudnúť na už vyslovené a objaviť to nanovo.”)

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## Prague Spring on the Periphery: Eastern Slovak Steelworkers React to Reform and Invasion in 1968

Marty Manor Mullins

*"Meetings have been taking place at factories to oppose factory directors.... At the Košice metallurgical combine [Eastern Slovak Steelworks],...the director, Cde. Knižka, was accused of receiving an excessively high salary, of owning a new car, of having a private room in the recreational facility, and of other such things. Newspapers all over the country covered this in full, and as a result, Cde. Knižka reached the point where he suddenly had a heart attack in Bratislava."*<sup>1</sup>

–Report from Yuriy Il'nytsk'kyi, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party's Transcarpathian Oblast Committee, to Petro Shelest, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, April 30, 1968.

*"The largest factory VSŽ [Eastern Slovak Steelworks] is preparing a general strike if Dubček does not appear today on the radio or on television. Other factories are joining their appeal which is threatening paralysis of the entire business life."*<sup>2</sup>

–Košice Municipal Police Report, August 22, 1968.

While the entire country of Czechoslovakia was invaded by Soviet forces on the night of August 21, 1968, and the majority of fatalities occurred in Prague, eastern Slovakia's encounter with the Warsaw Pact troops and its civic response remain largely unknown to the English-speaking world. As the year 2018 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Prague Spring reform era and ensuing Soviet invasion, scholars seek to understand how these Cold War events occurred not only in Prague and Bratislava, but also in the country's provincial regions. This investigation of recently-declassified Slovak and Ukrainian<sup>3</sup> archival documents reveals the apprehensive correspondence in early 1968 between high-ranking Communist comrades on either side of the Slovak and Ukrainian border, especially regarding the mounting democratization in the eastern Slovak region.

Reports indicate that events on the periphery were not merely parenthetical to operations taking place in the capital cities. In particular, the workers at Slovakia's largest steel mill, Eastern Slovak Steelworks (Východoslovenské železiarne or VSŽ,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Mark Kramer, "Ukraine and the Soviet-Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968 (Part 2)," in *Cold War International History Project*, eds. Christian Friedrich Ostermann and Kathryn Weathersby (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Winter 2003-2004), 284.

<sup>2</sup> "August 1968, Situačná správa Mestskej správy VB Košice odoslaná 22.8.1968," *Ústav pamäti národa (ÚPN)*, Bratislava, Slovakia, <http://www.upn.gov.sk/august-68/data/obete/obete-augusta-68.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> For Ukrainian archival documents, this article relies on the work of scholar Mark Kramer as published in "Ukraine and the Soviet-Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968 (Part 2)," in *Cold War International History Project*, eds. Christian Friedrich Ostermann and Kathryn Weathersby (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Winter 2003-2004). Kramer translated and annotated the archival files for this report.

today U.S. Steel) were condemning their superiors and calling for solutions to national as well as local crises. Such agitations caught the attention of First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Petro Shelest, who forwarded them to the Kremlin. This article therefore exposes the untold story of eastern Slovakia's experience of and contribution to this turning point in Czechoslovak history. By examining worker reactions at the Eastern Slovak Steelworks both before and after the invasion, it explores the impact citizens on the country's periphery had at this time.

Located far to the east of Prague and Bratislava, Košice was the fastest-growing urban center in Czechoslovakia from 1961-1967,<sup>4</sup> its population tripling from 1950 to 1961.<sup>5</sup> By 1968, 236,808 individuals called Košice home,<sup>6</sup> primarily due to the migration of individuals working at the steel mill, which was teeming with over 17,000 workers in 1968.<sup>7</sup> What is more, during the Warsaw Pact invasion of the country on August 21, 1968, Košice reported by far the highest number of injuries in Slovakia. Seven were killed (two of them employees at the steel mill), sixty-one others were wounded by bullets, and ten more were hit by troop vehicles or otherwise injured. In Bratislava by comparison, reports indicate that six were killed, ten survived bullet wounds, and three more were otherwise injured.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 1: US Steel Plant, Košice (Photo by M. M. Mullins)

<sup>4</sup> Krajské oddelenie Štátneho Štatistického Úradu, *Štatistika o hlavnom meste Slovenska Bratislave (Štatistická ročenka) 1968*, (Bratislava: EPOCHA, 1968), 46-47.

<sup>5</sup> The city's population grew from 62,465 in 1950 to 182,669 in 1961. --Štefan Šutaj, "Ethnic Development in Košice after 1945," *Studia Historyczne* 4 (2013), 471.

<sup>6</sup> *Štatistická Ročenka Východoslovenskej Oblasti* (Košice: Oblastný odbor Slovenského štatistického úradu, 1969), 41.

<sup>7</sup> Jaromír Neuhort, "Ohováraním sa družba nepestuje," *Ocel' východu*, Sept. 13, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> "Oběti okupace," *Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes*, <http://www.ustrcr.cz/en/august-1968-victims-of-the-occupation>.



The fact that Eastern Slovak Steelworks had become an essential component of Košice's identity at this time prompts questions such as: how did the city's steel workers react to Party reform-leader Alexander Dubček's agenda to liberalize Communism? In what concrete ways did they express their opinions? Was their collective influence a concern to Party leadership? Did their positions change after the tanks occupied the town? The answers to these questions prove instructive and unexpected.

To set the stage for the Soviet aggression, this account first considers the conditions that prompted it, namely the unprecedented reforms spearheaded by Czechoslovak Communist Party Premier Dubček and their manifestation in eastern Slovakia. The topic then narrows to focus on steel worker-specific civic action in Košice before August 21, 1968, followed by a brief narration of the incursion into the city. Finally, local labor's distinct response to the invasion is examined.

### **The Nationwide “Thaw” that was the Prague Spring**

Czechoslovakia's eight month experimental effort to soften the hardline Marxist-Stalinist rule it had experienced since 1948<sup>9</sup> began at the January 5, 1968 Czechoslovak Communist Party's Central Committee plenum with the election of Dubček as Party First Secretary and the removal of conservative Antonín Novotný. Having served as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia in the early 1960s, Dubček had raised the hopes of other change-minded leaders in the Party by initiating reforms such as allowing the Slovak press to address topics that remained censored in the Czech media. His promotion in 1968 marked the first time a Slovak was elected to command the Party from Prague. During his first months in office from January to August 1968, Czechoslovakia experienced degrees of free market economic policy and a relaxation of travel constraints, as well as a “thaw” of the rigid censorship<sup>10</sup> on the media, intellectual publications, and cultural expressions.<sup>11</sup> These seemingly radical top-down policy changes emboldened

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<sup>9</sup> The Communist Party consolidated its power over Czechoslovakia's government in a 1948 coup.

<sup>10</sup> Censorship of the press was revoked in April 1968. Laura Cashman, “Remembering 1948 and 1968: Reflections on Two Pivotal Years in Czech and Slovak History,” in *1948 and 1968: Dramatic Milestones in Czech and Slovak History*, ed. Laura Cashman (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 1651.

<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that recent archival findings complicate our understanding of Dubček as a sincere reformer. While indeed intent on liberalization, Dubček was quite genuine about trying to mend the situation in Czechoslovakia that displeased the Kremlin and was also concerned with his own rise to power. As noted by historian Kieran Williams, transcripts from the late July 1968 meeting between Brezhnev and Dubček at Čierna nad Tisou disclose that he vowed to reinstate censorship, marginalize extreme revolutionaries, abolish newly-formed political groups and maintain the secret police. Williams argues that Dubček was trying to obey the Kremlin's demands, but in his own time, which was taking much longer than Moscow and its satellite states could tolerate. Kieran Williams, “The Prague Spring: From Elite Liberalisation to Mass Movement,” in *Revolution and Resistance in Eastern Europe: Challenges to Communist Rule*, eds. Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe

Czech and Slovak appeals to purge the Party of incompetent leaders, to form civic organizations apart from government administration, to be able to openly criticize the regime and to restore the reputations of those whom the regime had been wrongly discredited over the past twenty years.

Additionally, by the late 1960s the Czechoslovak economy was failing and a lack of consumer goods contributed to the general discontent. In short, the Communist system that so many had voluntarily embraced in the wake of World War II had disappointed if not alienated Czechs and Slovaks who, by this time, had witnessed the Stalinist-era show trials and repressive purges of the 1950s in their own country. Mounting dissatisfaction also reverberated from eastern Slovakia, raising alarms not only among Slovak Party leaders but also among those in Ukraine, which lay just over fifty miles from Košice.

Documents from Ukrainian Archives underscore the growing concern among satellite states (particularly those adjacent to Czechoslovakia) that the Prague Spring fever would infect their populations as well. First Secretary Shelest commissioned reports from Party leaders in Ukraine's *Transcarpathian Oblast* or "Carpathian Mountain Territory" (adjacent to Czechoslovakia), including their KGB directorate. As noted by scholar Mark Kramer, Shelest flagged and forwarded any information regarding the neighboring liberalization movement directly to Moscow's Politburo.<sup>12</sup>

### Local Expressions of Civil Society<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to H. Gordon Skilling's seminal chronicle of the Prague Spring, which denied that any new civic organizations emerged in Slovakia at this time, new archival evidence reveals the opposite<sup>14</sup> Steel worker involvement in Czechoslovakia's Prague Spring occurred within the context of a regional revival. In order to put in perspective their specific contributions to the movement, this article takes a preliminary glance at how calls for change were manifested among eastern Slovakia's populace. They made inroads in expanding a more open civil society by forming civic organizations independent of the government, demonstrating that it was not only the Czechs who were actively involved in the reform effort.<sup>15</sup> As a result, many fresh, reform-minded members joined the Party

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(Oxford, UK: Berg, 2006), 102-103.

<sup>12</sup> Kramer, "Ukraine and the Soviet-Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968 (Part 2)," 273.

<sup>13</sup> "Civil society," as used in this article, refers to individuals or groups acting outside the government's control.

<sup>14</sup> H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 244. As mentioned in Williams, "The Prague Spring: From Elite Liberalisation to Mass Movement," 108.

<sup>15</sup> The most significant achievement hailing from eastern Slovakia at this time was the reestablishment of the Greek Catholic Church in June 1968. Greek Catholicism was the one confession in the country to be completely abolished by the regime in 1950 only to achieve reinstatement just eighteen years later largely due to the violence that broke out in eastern Slovakia as believers began seizing back their churches from the Orthodox. For more, see

indicating the effort to infuse it with new life.<sup>16</sup> Not wanting to abandon socialism altogether, their motto became: “Socialism with a Human Face.” Archival records of the unscheduled Regional Conference of Eastern Slovakia’s Regional Party Organization (at which Dubček himself participated) on July 6, 1968 show that area Party membership was up. From January to June 1968, the Party in eastern Slovakia grew by the same percentage as during the previous year (36 percent) but in the same period lost 43 percent fewer members than in 1967. Moreover, 45 percent of the new members were young people aged twenty-five and under.<sup>17</sup> Thus, although Party membership was rising in the east, the demographics were shifting toward a younger generation.

In addition to regional societal efforts to augment Party ranks with fresh affiliates, springtime in eastern Slovakia saw citizens take action in numerous ways. An April 8, 1968 report from the Eastern Slovak Regional National Committee’s Organizational Committee in Košice reflects the heightened grassroots participation characteristic of the “thaw:”

... in the [eastern Slovak] region in the month of March there were 492 public meetings in which almost 42,000 citizens participated, which presents an average of ninety-five citizens at one public meeting. ... The discussion at these public gatherings was lively....<sup>18</sup>

The document goes on to state that participants requested the ability to propose candidates themselves, rather than those recommended by the Party.<sup>19</sup>

The increase in civic involvement did not stop with efforts to modify the Party, however. Students also joined the chorus calling for radical policy change. Perhaps the most vocal manifestation of civil society in Košice occurred on March 15, 1968 from 9:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. when approximately 1,000 university students took to the streets parading in front of the building where the 1945 Košice Program was signed by President Edvard Beneš and leaders of the revived postwar Czechoslovak

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the author’s article: “A Remarkable Reversal: Communist Czechoslovakia’s Reinstatement of Eastern Rite Catholicism during the Prague Spring” *Journal of Church and State* (Spring 2016) 58 (2): 331-354. Also see Paul Robert Magocsi, *Of the Making of Nationalities There is No End Vol. I: Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe and North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). The regime’s policy reversal concerning Greek Catholicism was one of only two major Prague Spring reforms that endured after the Soviet invasion of August 21, 1968. The other change that remained until 1989 (introduced by Dubček during the Prague Spring, passed into law in October 1968, and implemented in January 1969) was the federalization of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic.

<sup>16</sup> Jozef Sulaček, “Košice a Pražská Jar v Roku 1968,” in Štefan Eliáš, *Menej známe kapitoly z dejín Košíc za ostatných sto rokov*. (Košice: Dejepisný Spolok v Košiciach, 1999), 50.

<sup>17</sup> Štátny Archív Košíc, Krajský Výbor, Komunistická strana slovenska v Košiciach, 1968, Box 6. [Hereafter: ŠA, KV, KSS v KE, 1968.]

<sup>18</sup> Štátny Archív Košíc, Sekretariát Krajský Národný Výbor, Východoslovenský kraj, 1968, Box 243, File 28. [Hereafter: ŠA, Sekretariát KNV, Vsl. Kraj, 1968].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Republic.<sup>20</sup> According to municipal secret police reports, two students gave speeches at the building while others chanted “Long live the Communist Party of Slovakia, long live Dubček, long live Slovak federation, and long live Warsaw.”<sup>21</sup> They also sang the Czechoslovak national anthem and demanded academic freedom. This demonstration followed that of March 11 when 1,000 university students in Košice had chanted against the “barbaric” war in Vietnam and publicly supported Dubček’s administration in Prague.<sup>22</sup>

This information points to the fact that civil society was alive and well in Košice and eastern Slovakia. Short of a detailed investigation into the statistics reflecting citizen participation in Prague and Bratislava during the spring and summer of 1968, it is impossible to determine how Košice’s degree of citizen involvement compares to that of other urban centers around the republic. However, it is possible to highlight noteworthy expressions of civil society that occurred in what was becoming one of Czechoslovakia’s premier steel towns.<sup>23</sup> The balance of the text examines the distinct ways in which the local steel workers and other laborers made their voices heard at this time.

Archival documents from spring and summer 1968 reveal worker demands expressed in the form of letters, written resolutions and attendance at group meetings. Reporting on a conversation he had with First Secretary of Eastern Slovakia’s Regional Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Ján Koscelanský, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party’s *Transcarpathian Oblast* (Carpathian Mountain District) Committee Yurii Il’nytsk’kyi reported the following to Shelest on April 30, 1968:

Meetings have been taking place at factories to oppose factory directors. Workers are demanding increased pay and are pressing all sorts of claims against the heads of enterprises.

At the Košice metallurgical combine [VSŽ], for example, during one such meeting, the director, Cde. Knižka, was accused of receiving an excessively high salary, of owning a new car, of having a private room in the recreational facility, and of other such things. Newspapers all over the country covered this in full, and

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<sup>20</sup> For a limited time in spring 1945 Košice served as the capital and seat of President Beneš who, with his cabinet, drafted the basis for the renewed state, which became known as the “Košice Program” of April 4-6, 1945.

<sup>21</sup> ŠA, Sekretariát KNV, Vsl. Kraj, 1968, “Doplňok,” Box 60. University students joined other Slovaks who pushed for the federalization of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. “Long live Warsaw” was a reference to the March 1968 events in Poland where university students and intellectuals protested the government’s prohibition of a theater play by Adam Mickiewicz on the grounds that it was anti-Soviet. Perhaps motivated by Czechoslovakia’s simultaneous reform movement, thousands of students took to the streets in Warsaw and other cities but were suppressed by police.

<sup>22</sup> ŠA, Sekretariát KNV, Vsl. Kraj, 1968, “Doplňok,” Box 60.

<sup>23</sup> With the emphasis on heavy industry in the early Cold War era, massive steel plants in the Czech Lands, such as those in Kladno (outside of Prague) and Ostrava, produced even more steel than the mill in Košice. By 1968 Eastern Slovak Steelworks had achieved the distinction of being the largest steel mill in Slovakia, employing a massive labor collective.

as a result, Cde. Knižka reached the point where he suddenly had a heart attack in Bratislava.<sup>24</sup>

Steel worker complaints were heating up and required the attention of one of the country's top-ranking Communists, Emil Rigo, one of the very few Slovak Roma who had risen to the highest echelon of the country's administration.

### **Emil Rigo and Steel Mill Rumblings**

Rigo chaired the Communist Party Committee at Košice's Eastern Slovak Steelworks but he also was one of only eleven members of Communist Czechoslovakia's elite cabinet-like Presidium, led by Dubček and Prime Minister Oldřich Černík. Notably, two of these eleven Presidium members hailed from eastern Slovakia—Rigo and Vasil' Biľak. Biľak, the top-ranking Communist official in all of Slovakia from 1968-1988, was a tailor by trade from the Slovak town of Krajná Bystrá on the eastern Slovak and Polish border. Of Rusyn ancestry and commonly referred to as "Ukrainian," Biľak was resented by many who did not like the fact that, though not ethnically Slovak, he held the highest governmental position in Slovakia.<sup>25</sup> Both Rigo and Biľak came under fire from locals in eastern Slovakia after the August 21, 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, especially when it was rumored that a member of the Presidium had "invited" the Soviet forces to suppress the "counter-revolutionary element" in Czechoslovakia. Reporting on Biľak's death in 2014, the *New York Times* quoted Jan Richter, Czech journalist with Radio Prague, as saying, "Of all the Communist hard-liners, Bilak was a household name, and as such he was deeply reviled among Czechs in the 1970s and 1980s."<sup>26</sup>

A Party man and hardline Communist, Rigo reported to his peers at a May 29, 1968 meeting of Košice's City Committee of the Communist Party that, in an effort to tame worker objections, Eastern Slovak Steelworks' own Party Committee held a meeting in Košice on April 4, 1968 in which 450 comrades participated. However, due to unresolved demands and objections, workers insisted on another wider-based meeting, open to the public. Such a meeting took place on April 11 when 1,500 VSŽ workers gathered at the city's downtown Sport Hall. In spite of these meetings, Party leaders failed to defuse worker demands, including those concerning wages. Convinced that functionaries were mismanaging the situation, Rigo criticized them for their incompetence. He noted their insufficient counter arguments and accused

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Kramer, "Ukraine and the Soviet-Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968 (Part 2)," 284.

<sup>25</sup> In a memo sent from Shelest to Moscow, he recounted Comrade Koscelanský's characterization of Biľak and Rigo, two men Koscelanský disliked: "Cde. J. Koscelanský had said it was abnormal for a Ukrainian to be in control of the Slovak nation and for a Gypsy [Roma] (he was referring here to Cde. E. Rigo—a member of the KSČ presidium and chairman of the party committee of the East Slovakian metallurgical combine) to be representing the East Slovakian region." Ibid., 327.

<sup>26</sup> Dan Bilefsky, "Vasil Bilak, 96, Dies; Czech Communist Encouraged 1968 Soviet Invasion," *New York Times*, Feb. 6, 2014.

them of succumbing to a “mass psychosis” which “drove many functionaries into passivity.”<sup>27</sup>

Yet calls for change were coming from not only steel workers outside the Party but from inside as well, particularly from workers in the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (*Revolučné odborové hnutie* or ROH), the steel mill’s labor union.<sup>28</sup> Documents from Košice’s State Archive reveal that Rigo iterated demands put forward by Eastern Slovak Steelwork ROH members at a May 29, 1968 meeting with Košice’s City Committee’s Communist Party of Slovakia.<sup>29</sup> Workers called for the removal of Novotný as President of the Republic, intensified action concerning the federalization of Czechoslovakia, a solution to the “nationality questions” in Slovakia, completion of the second steel plant project at the VSŽ factory and the request for a reassessment and/or resignation of certain steel mill business managers.<sup>30</sup>

Complaints and civic action among the steel workers had reached the point where Eastern Slovak Steelworks’ chief manager in 1968, Michal Hanka, felt compelled to deliver the following account to the eastern Slovak Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia on July 31, less than one month before the Soviet invasion. He conveyed that production had decreased in April and May due to heated discussions and even work stoppages by certain workers and factory collectives who demanded higher pay and/or the replacement of certain financial or Party and union representatives. This dip in production rates may have been the result of Eastern Slovak Steelworks being “one of the first factories in eastern Slovakia where the democratization process was first expressed and with full intensity,” as Hanka characterized.<sup>31</sup> He further reported, “...we can state that the workers of our factory have intensively joined in the revivalist and democratization processes, which testifies to a lot of political activity in the last half year, expressed not only in various meetings but also in resolutions, letters and demands.”<sup>32</sup> This assessment is verified by a June 4, 1968 message to Comrade Shelest which stated: “According to the acting director of the east Slovak metallurgical combine (in Košice), party and work discipline at the combine has

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<sup>27</sup> Štátny Archív Košíc, Mestský Výbor, Komunistická strana slovenska v Košiciach, 1968, Box 77, File 4. [Hereafter: ŠA, MV, KSS v KE, 1968].

<sup>28</sup> As the Communist-sponsored universal trade union to which all Czechoslovak workers belonged, the ROH was the largest societal organization in the country.

<sup>29</sup> ŠA, MV KSS v KE, 1968, Box 77, File 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. “Federalization” refers to the Slovak push for equal representation in Prague’s administration and legislative assembly as well as allowing Slovakia to govern its own affairs rather than having them dictated by Prague. For more on Slovak federalization during the Prague Spring, see: Scott A. Brown, “Socialism with a Slovak Face: Federalization, Democratization, and the Prague Spring,” *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2008): 467-495. The steel worker demand for the state to find a solution to the nationality question in Slovakia alludes to the fact that a number of Hungarians (and Roma) were employed at the VSŽ factory.

<sup>31</sup> ŠA, MV KSS v KE, 1968, Box 77, File 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

recently deteriorated. Many demagogues have infiltrated the combine, spreading dissent about improper economic relations with the USSR and other matters.”<sup>33</sup> The reference to “improper economic relations with the USSR” is explained by a March 21, 1968 memo recounting a conversation between Slovakia’s Comrade Koscelanský and Ukraine’s Comrade Il’nytsk’kyi. Koscelanský described the growing dissatisfaction with the economy in Czechoslovakia, which many believed was a result of “unequal trade agreements between the USSR and Czechoslovakia.”<sup>34</sup>

Czechoslovakia was indeed dependent on raw materials from the USSR (mentioned in the above reference to Ukrainian iron ore and coal) and reportedly one-third of the country’s foreign trade was with the USSR.<sup>35</sup> Regardless, Czechs and Slovaks were increasingly dissatisfied with economic conditions (especially the availability of consumer goods) in the 1960s and this grievance was leaking into steel workers’ demands for higher pay, particularly considering the importance of steel production for the nation’s economy.

Disruption in the production process resulted in the Košice steel mill’s decreased output in the first half of 1968, which Hanka attributed in part to “problems relating to managing and organizing work and adhering to technological and work discipline.”<sup>36</sup> The introduction of even minimal democratic freedoms at the factory and in larger city politics (such as the August release of the list of candidates for eastern Slovakia’s delegates to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia *before* the election, which was not customary) created quite a commotion in Košice and within factory relations between managers and workers. Some Eastern Slovak Steelwork managers were sympathetic to the increased liberalization of society including Ivan Jesenský, Chair of the Factory Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (ROH) at the VSŽ steel mill.

In an *Eastern Slovak News* (*Východoslovenské noviny*) article published on August 20, 1968 Jesenský stated, “It is right that you [*Východoslovenské noviny*] are making public the candidates to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia so that we can at least know in advance who would be elected to the highest Party organ. In the past the base Party organizations placed [candidates] ahead of time and [we] found out after the congress, and this in my opinion was not right.”<sup>37</sup> The steel mill’s own Revolutionary Trade Union Movement group even

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Kramer, 308.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 278. Il’nytsk’kyi’s response (as recorded in the memo) points directly to the growing import of Eastern Slovak Steelworks: “I can’t speak about trade as a whole, but Czechoslovakia now is third in the world in the production of metals per capita, and once you begin operating the metallurgical combine in Košice with a capacity of 6 million tons of steel a year—a combine that was equipped with assistance from the USSR and with our raw materials, and every day receives 23,000 tons of Kryvyi Rih iron ore and 6,110 tons of Donets’k coal—your country will occupy first place in these categories.”

<sup>35</sup> Kramer, 336.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> “Konali ste správne!” *Vsl. noviny*, Aug. 20, 1968.

changed its voting practices to those “according to democratic principles,” as the August 2 edition of the factory newspaper *Ocel' východu* (*Eastern Steel*) reported.<sup>38</sup> Reform-minded leaders at VSŽ like Jesenský pushed for changes within the Party's typical workplace voting procedures and the workers responded.

### Čierna nad Tisou:

One of the greatest displays of local labor's support for Dubček and his effort to amend socialism was the praise he received at the critical Čierna nad Tisou negotiations with General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev. Čierna nad Tisou is a small town (approximately sixty miles southeast of Košice) located on the border where today's Slovakia, Ukraine and



Záber z stretnutia dňa rokovaní Produckalstva ČV ČSČ a politického byro KSSZ v Čiernej nad Tisou. Ján ČSČ

## Rozhovory pokračujú

Košice — Ako oznámila ČSTK, v Čiernej nad Tisou pokračovali včera rokovania politického byro Ústredného výboru Komunistickej strany Sovietskeho zväzu a Predsedníctva Ústredného výboru Komunistickej strany Československa. Rozhovory prebiehali v oboch súdružskej otvorenosti. V diskusii vystúpili jednotliví členovia oboch straných orgánov. Tesne pred uzavretím nám náš redaktor Ján

Kajsič z Čiernej nad Tisou telefonoval: Niekoľko minút pred 21. hod. rokovanie z druhého dňa prerušili, nakoľko i sovietska delegácia sa odpravila do svojich vlakov na druhý odpočinok. Sovietski súdruhovia opäť odšli svojimi osobitými vlakmi na vlastné územie. Rokovanie, ktoré bude pokračovať dnu rón, je podľa posledných informácií na dobrej ceste.

Figure 2: “Conversations Continue” *Pravda* (Slovakia), July 31, 1968

leaders to communicate their loyalty. Košice steel workers even drove in a caravan of thirty cars to Čierna nad Tisou in hopes of catching a glimpse of Dubček and his fellow politicians, to show support and to invite Brezhnev to visit the VSŽ steel mill.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, blue-collar laborers across Košice endorsed Dubček as he went to meet with Brezhnev. A Bratislava-published *Pravda* (*Truth*) article from July 29, 1968 interviewed workers from around Slovakia (including Košice), asking how people

Hungary meet. Brezhnev and top Soviet leaders flew to Košice to meet with Dubček and his fellow liberal-minded Party leaders from July 29 to August 1, 1968 to discuss what Brezhnev feared was democratic socialism “out of hand” in Czechoslovakia. Although the rendezvous was secret, information leaked and locals went to the Košice airport to greet and encourage Dubček for what they knew would be a difficult meeting for him. In addition to the administrative delegates from Košice, numerous private individuals travelled to Čierna nad Tisou trying to meet with Dubček and the reformist Czechoslovak

<sup>38</sup> “Vol'by orgánov ROH podľa demokratických zásad,” *Ocel' východu*, Aug. 2, 1968.

<sup>39</sup> “Prvý deň v Čiernej n.T.,” *Ocel' východu*, August 2, 1968; Jaromír Neuhort, “Pokračujeme tak i naďalej,” *Ocel' východu*, Aug. 9, 1968.



felt about seeing off Dubček as he entered negotiations with the Soviets. Košice railroad worker Ján Klacik responded tellingly:

I am of the opinion that we should solve our internal affairs ourselves, without any kind of outside intervention. Soviet friends should understand that we do not want to return to capitalism. We all ... [find] Czechoslovak socialism satisfactory. We fully support the leadership of our Party ... all of eastern Slovakia, and I think of the whole republic, are now crossing our fingers and will keep them crossed during the negotiations.... We should have had this kind of Party leadership twenty years ago.<sup>40</sup>

Local telecommunications worker Imrich Géci stated, “Delegates from our Party must defend our own way [of socialism] at the talks with the Soviet comrades. We all are crossing our fingers for them!” Jozef Mikula, who worked for Eastern Slovak Press echoed, “...today our path is most optimal, that best meets our specific circumstances. And the Soviet comrades should believe us, no they should also support us [so that] we will not step away from the paths leading toward Communism.”<sup>41</sup>

Similar sentiment was expressed at the VSŽ factory. The August 2 edition of *Eastern Steel* reports that thousands of steel workers and even chief factory managers signed petition papers calling for “Socialism, Alliance, Sovereignty and Freedom!”<sup>42</sup> What they did not suspect was that Brezhnev, who had assisted in Košice’s liberation from the Nazis in 1945, had different intentions upon his visit to the city twenty years later.

Indeed, upon landing in Košice, Brezhnev had acknowledged Košice’s local delegates and recalled January 1945 when he was in the city as the 18th Russian Army’s primary political commissar (*hlavný politruk*).<sup>43</sup> Here lies one of the ironies of history—the very same Leonid Brezhnev, who met with Dubček at Čierna nad Tisou and days later issued the command to invade the country in August 1968, had personally been present in Košice in 1945. He delivered the news to Košice in 1945 about the annulment of the First Vienna Arbitration Award, which had ceded Southern Slovakia to Hungary in 1938. The initial “liberator” had turned “oppressor.”<sup>44</sup> No amount of citizen endorsement for “Socialism with a Human Face” could prevent the coming storm.

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<sup>40</sup> “K socializmu len januárovou cestou,” *Pravda*, July 29, 1968.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Jaromír Neuhort, “Socializmus, spojenectvo, suverenita, sloboda!” *Ocel’ východu*, Aug. 2, 1968.

<sup>43</sup> Viera Horniaková, “Výročie oslobodenia Košíc. Komu vlastne kladieme vence?” *Košice Dnes* (Košice, Slovakia) January 19, 2016. <http://www.Košicednes.sk/oslobodenie-kosic-komu-vlastne-kladieme-vence/>

<sup>44</sup> Sulaček, “Košice a Pražska Jar v roku 1968,” 57-58.

## The Reckoning

On the night of August 20-21, 1968, Warsaw Pact<sup>45</sup> troops from East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union crossed the Czechoslovak borders from multiple directions. The maneuver was the largest military operation in Europe since the end of the Second World War. That evening approximately 200,000 troops entered the country, occupying first the airports of the main cities and then strategic buildings such as the newspaper and radio stations, post offices and government buildings. Just days later approximately 450,000-500,000 soldiers occupied the country.<sup>46</sup> The troops had purportedly been “invited” by hardliners within the Czechoslovak Communist Party who went unnamed until 1992 when Russian archives revealed that Party leader Antonín Kapek sent the first invitation letter in late July.<sup>47</sup> Biľak (on behalf of five of Dubček’s former sympathizers) reportedly passed the second invitation to Shelest during a break in the August 3 meeting between the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and four other Warsaw Pact nations.<sup>48</sup> Dubček and his fellow Party revisionist leaders were taken to Moscow where they were browbeaten and forced to sign the Moscow Protocol recanting elements of the regeneration movement and allowing Soviet troops to remain in the country.

According to Interior Ministry reports gathered by Slovakia’s National Memory Institute or *Ústav pamäti národa*, more Slovaks were killed in Košice during the invasion than in any other Slovak town or city, including Bratislava.<sup>49</sup> As mentioned previously, a total of seven died in Košice, six of them on August 21, 1968.<sup>50</sup> What is more, Košice reported by far the highest number of injuries in

<sup>45</sup> In response to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, the Soviet Union and its East European satellite states formed the Warsaw Pact defensive alliance in 1955.

<sup>46</sup> Mark Kramer, “The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion in Historical Perspective” in *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968*, eds., Günter Bischof, Stefan Karner, and Peter Ruggenthaler (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2010), 48.

<sup>47</sup> Williams, “The Prague Spring: From Elite Liberalisation to Mass Movement,” 103; At the time of the invasion it was generally believed among Czechs and Slovaks that Biľak was responsible for “inviting” the Warsaw Pact troops. Archival records reveal that one of the two death threats received by Biľak while he was vacationing in the Carpathian Mountains that summer was sent from Košice. The report states, “One of these letters was sent from Košice,... The writer reproached him that he betrayed the nation that trusted him and therefore he will be killed even when the NKVD [Communist secret police] are guarding him. Death awaits everyone who will betray. It finished with the signature, ‘the people who trusted you.’” ŠA KE “Krajská správa Zboru národnej bezpečnosti Košice: Správa o výskyte anonymných dopisov, letákov vo Vsl. Kraji za obdobie od 21. augusta 1968,” Nov. 18, 1968, No. SV-0036/01—68. (Courtesy Scott A. Brown).

<sup>48</sup> According to McDermott, Biľak passed the invitation to Shelest in the men’s restroom. McDermott, *Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-89*, 144.

<sup>49</sup> “August 1968,” *Ústav pamäti národa (ÚPN)*, Bratislava, Slovakia, <http://www.upn.gov.sk/august-68/data/obete/obete-augusta-68.pdf>; Juraj Bauer, *A plynní staročia* (Košice, OTA, a.s. Mesto Košice, 2007), 10.

<sup>50</sup> The seventh victim, Bartolomej Horváth, succumbed to his wounds on September 11,

Slovakia with sixty-one individuals shot (not fatally) and ten more who were hit by troop vehicles or otherwise injured. In the Slovak capital of Bratislava, six were killed, ten survived bullet wounds, and three more were otherwise injured.<sup>51</sup> A total of thirty died in the Slovak part of the country while 108 were killed, approximately 500 seriously injured and hundreds more slightly injured in the entire country of Czechoslovakia.<sup>52</sup> Most of the casualties occurred during the first days of the invasion but these figures take into account victims through the end of the year 1968.<sup>53</sup>

Fortunately Štefan Eliáš's eye-witness account of these turbulent days has recently been published by one of Košice's well-known historians.<sup>54</sup> Curiously, he began his year of mandatory civil service the day before the attack, on August 20, 1968, as a twenty-five-year old. Eliáš's report and other eye-witness accounts enhance the archival and period newspaper records and facilitate a reconstruction of the chronology of events in Košice, particularly during the initial days of the occupation.

Residents awoke on the morning of August 21, 1968 to a column of vehicles and tanks entering their hometown. The Prague airport had already been occupied since shortly before midnight and news of occupation maneuvers had begun to spread from various areas of the country.<sup>55</sup> The incoming soldiers occupied the Košice airport by 5:15 a.m.<sup>56</sup> Five minutes later, at 5:20 a.m., the Czechoslovak Radio broadcast the following report: "At the request of leading figures of our republic and because of the threat to our country and socialism, Warsaw Pact armies are arriving to help."<sup>57</sup>

The first Warsaw Pact soldiers to reach Košice were Bulgarian. An army report from General Dobri Džurov, Bulgaria's Minister of National Defense, details the movement of the Bulgarian army across the easternmost Czechoslovak border on

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1968.

<sup>51</sup> Not all injuries and fatalities may have been reported in Bratislava, Košice or any other Czechoslovak locale as some victims may have feared reprisal from the regime in the wake of occupation.

<sup>52</sup> "Oběti okupace," *Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes*, <http://www.ustrcr.cz/en/august-1968-victims-of-the-occupation>

<sup>53</sup> "Situačná správa Mestskej správy VB Košice odoslaná 22.8.1968," *Slovak National Memory Institute*, <http://www.upn.gov.sk/archiv-upn>; "Oběti okupace," *Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes*, <http://www.ustrcr.cz/en/august-1968-victims-of-the-occupation>; Mikuláš Jesenský, "L'udia spomínali na 21. august 1968" *SME*, Aug. 22, 2006; Bauer, 10; *Nový Čas*, "Koľko bolo obetí okupácie '68?" *Nový Čas* (Bratislava, Slovakia), August 21, 2014. <http://www.cas.sk/clanok/290987/kolko-bolo-obeti-okupacie-68-vypocet-vas-moze-poriadne-prekvapiť/>

<sup>54</sup> Eliáš served as Expert Advisor (*odborný radca*) and archivist at Košice's State Archive, has authored numerous publications and formerly chaired the city's historical society. Štefan Eliáš, *Čas našej úzkosti: Denník 100 dní roku 1968* (Košice: Solitudo, 1999).

<sup>55</sup> Sulaček, 60-61; Robert Littell, *Czech Black Book* (NY: Avon Press, 1969), 16.

<sup>56</sup> ŠA, MV KSS v KE, 1968, Box 12, File 5.

<sup>57</sup> Sulaček, 60-61; Alžbeta Linhardová, "Prišli iba potlačiť" údajnú kontrarevolúciu, napokon tu 'dočasne' ostali až 23 rokov..., *Košický Večer*, Aug. 22, 2008; Bauer, 10.

August 21, 1968. He records an uneventful border crossing at 4:05 a.m. and unobstructed progress for seventy-five miles until the unit reached Košice.

When reaching the central part of KOŠICE, the regiment encountered automobile, tram and other equipment barricades. A huge crowd consisting mainly of young people attacked the column and by throwing stones, bricks and other objects broke the windows of 40-50 automobiles, the doors of 10 automobiles and the antennas of 5 pieces of radio-transmission equipment. There were some attempts to force the drivers and the soldiers off some of the vehicles. With great difficulty, at a velocity of 4-5 km per hour the column broke through the crowd and continued its movement.<sup>58</sup>

By 9:00 a.m. a crowd of angry residents had assembled at Liberators' Square to express their disgust. Around 9:00 a.m. an armored tank issued a shooting warning. Tanks and trucks by then occupied Liberators' Square. Because the square was a critical intersection upon entering the city, it naturally became the focal point for civilian protest on the first day of the invasion and following.<sup>59</sup> A report from Košice's State Security branch dated August 21, 1968 further describes the angry protest in the center of town:

Around 2:00 p.m. on Lenin Street [Main Street] in Košice over 200 young people protested and shouted various vindictives such as "Let us go, Caesar! We are for Dubček and Svoboda. Go home!, etc." The demonstrators then proceeded to the intersection of Liberators' Square where they stopped a tram and also prevented passage of the military convoy. They again began throwing stones, which resulted in gunshots being heard from several [military] vehicles and ended in a number of individuals being injured.... The whole population of the Eastern Slovak region vehemently condemns the occupation of the ČSSR by Warsaw Pact soldiers. They say it is our tragedy and a disaster for the entire socialist alliance.<sup>60</sup>

The Soviet soldiers were reaching their limit and would soon retaliate.

## Violence on the Square

According to Eliáš, the troops did not strike out at the mass of protesting civilians for three hours, but at 12:30 P.M. they shot into the crowd gathered at

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<sup>58</sup> "Gen. Djurov's Report on the participation of Bulgarian troops in the Warsaw Pact operation in Czechoslovakia, 30 September 1968," September 30, 1968, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Central State Archive, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 49, File 158. Obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group. Translated by Vanja Petkova, Edited by Dr. Rositza Ishpekova and Kalin Kanchev. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110014>

<sup>59</sup> Linhardová, "Prišli iba potlačiť' údajnú kontrarevolúciu," *Košický Večer*, Aug. 22, 2008.

<sup>60</sup> Krajská správa ZNB, Správa Štátnej bezpečnosti Košice, Číslo SB-198/01-1968, 21 August 1968. Source: "August 1968, Documents" *Ústav pamäti národa (ÚPN)*, Bratislava, Slovakia.

<http://www.gov.sk/august68/data/dokumenty/rozne/Sprava%20o%20situacii%20vo%20Vychochoslovenskom%20kraj%2021%20augusta%201968.pdf>

Liberators' Square. Sixteen-year-old Michal Hamrák, an apprentice at Eastern Slovak Steelworks was the first victim. Protestors joined the construction workers across the street on the terrace roof of the Hotel Slovan, being built at that time, and threw rocks and bricks down at the armed transport that had converged between the hotel and the eight-story building. Andrew Vizer, another local, recalls that the occupants who lived in the upper floors of the eight-story building hid in the bathtub to avoid the shooting.<sup>61</sup>

The nearby shooting drew even more people to Liberators' Square, who threw stones, potatoes and beets at the tanks and taunted the troops with cries of "fascists, Gestapo!" They drew swastikas on posters and pasted protest slogans on the pillars of the square's memorial next to the hammer and sickle emblems.<sup>62</sup> Eliáš remembers how Košice residents rose up against the armed soldiers, who until recently they had spoken of as allies or friends. Using Russian vocabulary the Slovaks shouted, "We don't need that kind of friendship!" 'Brezhnev, how many children did you kill today?' 'This is our deal and none of your business' or 'Ivan, go home, Natasha is waiting for you!'"<sup>63</sup> Košice local Gene Fossner's photographs from August 21, 1968, show the destruction of Liberators' Square including the burning of a Soviet truck with the injured Soviet soldier standing in front of it.



*Figure 3: Injured Soviet soldier exiting a Soviet truck on Kosice's main square.  
Photo by Gene Fossner.*

<sup>61</sup> Andrew Vizer, interview by author, tape recording, Vancouver, BC, 23 Feb. 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Soňa Makarová, "August 1968 začiatok zmarených nádejí Československa," *SME*, Aug. 29, 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Linhardová, "Prišli iba potlačiť" údajnú kontrarevolúciu," *Košický Večer*, Aug. 22, 2008.

As Russian was a mandatory school subject in Communist Czechoslovakia, some Košice citizens tried to communicate with the Soviets in their own language, but the troops were unresponsive. A commemorative 2008 edition of the *Košický Večer* (*Košice Evening*) newspaper records, “most soldiers did not seem to know where they actually were and what they were doing here. Many were convinced that they were on their way to routine drills.”<sup>64</sup> Eye-witness Marianna Rylová Dombrovská recalls, “I know that people tried to speak to Russian soldiers and they discovered that the soldiers had no idea that they crossed the border and that they were in a different country. They had no idea what the purpose was of their arrival. People tried to explain the situation [to them].”<sup>65</sup> Fossner adds that the Soviet soldiers were told not to respond to questions or insults, despite the fact that inhabitants even spit on them.<sup>66</sup> Some soldiers were under the impression that their maneuvers were intended to put down a civil war or violent counter-revolution that was breaking out in the country. The invasion was justified by the Communists as “brotherly help.”<sup>67</sup>



Figure 4: Košice citizens interacting with Soviet soldiers on the main square.  
Photo by Gene Fossner.

The subsequent victims from the first day of the invasion include another steel worker, Ján Hatala, a nineteen-year old who was shot at a Košice gas station on the road to the nearby city of Prešov. A local newspaper reports that twenty-four-year-

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Marianna Rylová Dombrovská, interview by author, email, 12 Feb. 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Gene and Alice Fossner, interview by author, telephone, 2 Feb. 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Ján and Katarína Kobulský, interview by author, email, 20 Feb. 2010.

old Ladislav Martoník had gone that day to the Tuzex<sup>68</sup> store opposite Liberators' Square to buy engine oil. His father heard about the column of tanks occupying the downtown square but had no idea his son, just a few meters away, had been shot.<sup>69</sup> Fifty-three-year-old Ján László and forty-five-year-old Jozef Kolesár were both shot at Liberators' Square in Košice. László was a Hungarian shoemaker, who died at 3:30 p.m. and Kolesár, a workman, died with a bullet to the head. Ivan Schmiedt, twenty-seven, was on his way home from work as an engineer at the Czechoslovak State Railway on the afternoon of August 21 when the electric tram he was riding stopped because of shooting. The passengers scattered even as the Soviet soldiers shot at them. As he was running to the corner of Lenin and Štúr Streets, directly at Liberators' Square, Schmiedt caught a bullet in the back of the head. Twenty-one-year-old Bartolomej Horváth was also shot in the vicinity of Liberators' Square as he was one of the construction workers building the Hotel Slovan. He was shot in the stomach and left hand and taken to a nearby hospital where he died the following month on September 11.<sup>70</sup> Eliáš's diary from August 22 laments:

I am sorry, my dear city, I am sorry. Look, the oldest Košice skyscraper, riddled with bullet holes, is a meaningful memorial of the treachery, betrayals and disgrace which someone on the [Communist] Commission committed. My dear countrymen, if you look at the [Liberators'] square and see the smoking and overturned Soviet vehicles, if you remember the dead, who will never return again, do not forget, that none of us wanted this; that we wanted to live in peace with everyone.<sup>71</sup>

Although the Soviet command charged the citizens with using aggressive forms of resistance such as shooting, other than lighting the truck on fire at Liberators' Square, these charges have been found to be invalid. Two Soviet soldiers died in Košice during the first week of occupation, one by friendly fire and the other was shot by a Soviet commander for disobeying an order.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, seven were killed, most of them young people. The makeshift plaque placed on Liberator's Square shortly after the death of the first victim read: "Here the life of a young man was extinguished. Why?!"<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> "Tuzex" was a chain of stores across Czechoslovakia that sold foreign goods, otherwise unavailable under Communism, to consumers who could pay in foreign currency or special "vouchers" that were often acquired by service to the Party.

<sup>69</sup> M. Jesenský, "L'udia spomínali na 21. august 1968" *SME*, Aug. 22, 2006.

<sup>70</sup> "Oběti okupace," *Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes*, <http://www.ustrcr.cz/en/august-1968-victims-of-the-occupation>; M. Jesenský, "L'udia spomínali na 21. august 1968" *SME*, Aug. 22, 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Eliáš, 6.

<sup>72</sup> ŠA, MV KSS v KE, 1968, Box 12, File 5.

<sup>73</sup> Bauer, 10; Miroslav Sambor, "Uctili si obete vojenskej invázie v auguste 1968," *SME*, Aug. 22, 2009.





*Figure 5: Detail of plinth of Tomb of Unknown Soldier, Liberator's Square, Košice. Bullet holes still visible 40 years later. Photo by M. M. Mullins.*

### Local Party Leaders' Response

Košice's Communist Party leadership was equally shocked, confused and angry at the surprise invasion. Files from Košice's State Archive reveal that the City Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia (*Mestský výbor Komunistickej Strany Slovensko*) was divided regarding the appropriate response to their superiors in light of the seven innocents killed in their city by occupying soldiers. Notes from the unscheduled August 22, 1968 meeting of the committee chronicle how and when they learned of the incursion as well as their reply.

At 2:00 a.m. on the morning of August 21 leading committee members were telephoned at home and briefed on what the following day's meeting referred to as "an illegal act."<sup>74</sup> The meeting minutes describe the shock and betrayal felt even among these comrades: "the whole resulting situation worsened and for all practical purposes, after the deliberations in Bratislava and Čierna nad Tisou, [this] was hard to believe. The fact was nevertheless such that in actuality the occupation of our republic proceeded." The meeting continued to describe the local citizen response to the invasion: "The arrival of the occupying troops and the way they came into our city impacted the psyche of our inhabitants, who reacted with natural aversion, which was and is rightful from the perspective of our inhabitants."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> ŠA, MV KSS v KE, 1968, Box 12, File 5.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



How should they, as the city representatives of the Communist Party, respond to this aggression? To begin, they had to respond to their Soviet superiors. After making note of taking action to strengthen the local public security arm (VB or *Verejná bezpečnosť*), they narrate: “the situation is unclear and difficult to control. It’s not possible to engage the army, because that would go against the senior high command....” The committee next debated whether to support the planned citizen’s strike or to sanction complaints via written declaration only. In particular, they were concerned that the steel workers would join another public demonstration, which could result in more deaths. Leading Secretary of the City Communist Committee, Severín Martinka, warned, “we can’t allow ... the call for a strike from VSŽ because there wouldn’t be enough strength to handle the current situation and the situation could become exceptionally seriously complicated.” Comrade Juraj Pavlišák added, “The situation is extremely tangled and unclear. The news is contradictory. Information gained by way of the ÚV [Central Committee in Prague] is not sufficiently credible to verify and confirm its veracity.”<sup>76</sup> Košice Party leaders struggled to digest the reality that their streets were now occupied by Warsaw Pact troops and that six locals were already dead as of August 22, 1968. Unsure how to respond to both senior command and to grassroots calls for action, one thing was certain: they could not afford for the steel workers to call their own strike.

### Steel Worker Reaction

The Soviet invasion of August 21, 1968 did not quell steel worker support for liberalization. The official Communist “Situation Report” from the Košice Police dated August 22, 1968, reads: “The situation in the city still remains very tense. The reason is the arrival of the army because all the citizens are convinced that their arrival was not necessary and is unjust.”<sup>77</sup> The report mentions strikes that occurred in the city that day and that further preparations were being made for more strikes including one at Eastern Slovak Steelworks. “The largest factory VSŽ [Eastern Slovak Steelworks] is preparing a general strike if Dubček does not appear today on the radio or on television. Other factories are joining their appeal which is threatening paralysis of the entire business life.”<sup>78</sup> Indeed, on August 24, 1968 Bratislava’s *Pravda (Truth)* stated that the Eastern Slovak Steelworks issued calls for Dubček to be able to appear on radio and television to release the illegally imprisoned party and state commissaries. The steel workers threatened that if their requests were not fulfilled they would commence with a one-hour strike at 6:00 a.m. in addition to the general nation-wide strike scheduled for 12:00 noon.<sup>79</sup>

No less risky of a venture was the decision on behalf of a small portion of the steel workers to proceed with the planned factory commemoration of the 1944

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> “August 1968, Situačná správa Mestskej správy VB Košice odoslaná 22.8.1968,” *Ústav pamäti národa (ÚPN)*, Bratislava, Slovakia, <http://www.upn.gov.sk/august-68/data/obete/obete-augusta-68.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> “Hlas východného Slovenska,” *Pravda*, Aug. 24, 1968.

Slovak National Uprising, the large-scale resistance carried out by opponents of Slovakia's wartime regime and its Nazi patron, Jozef Tiso.<sup>80</sup> Celebrated annually on August 29, municipalities across Slovakia had cancelled or postponed their prepared tributes in 1968 in light of the invasion just eight days prior, according to historian J. Luke Ryder.<sup>81</sup> They were specifically concerned that observance of the 1944 uprising against unjust tyranny would ignite the populace to even more aggressive resistance of the previous week's invasion.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, over 450 VSŽ workers gathered in the industry's large auditorium to remember those who participated in the armed movement against the pro-fascist Slovak wartime administration.

Deputy VSŽ director Dionýz Kunder officially opened the ceremony, which was followed, ironically, by a bold address from the steel mill's leading representative of the Communist Party of Slovakia, J. Kočuta. As reported in *Eastern Steel*, Kočuta stated that "the strength of the Slovak National Uprising arose from the conscience and wisdom of our nation and we need to draw from these sources even today to solve our difficult situation. We firmly stand with the position of democratic socialism of our legally elected organs...." He proceeded to name Party reformers Dubček, President Ludvík Svoboda, Jozef Smrkovský, Černík as well as Gustáv Husák.<sup>83</sup> Those gathered then sent a telegram to the Central Committee in Prague in support of their political position.<sup>84</sup>

The 450 commemorators of the uprising may well have been members in the steel mill's Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (ROH) who had expressed demands for the federalization of the Republic in the spring of 1968. Their insistence on observing the Slovak National Uprising was most likely linked to the growing significance that Slovak nationalists (who were rallying for federalization) placed on the event.<sup>85</sup> The narrative of the Slovak National Uprising had been politicized a symbol of Slovak nationalism in the wake of the 1960 Czechoslovak constitutional mandate that administration of Slovakia be centered only in Prague, no longer permitting the token administration previously assigned to Bratislava.<sup>86</sup> Regardless of their motivations, the steel workers' participation in this memorial indicated a daring stance. It was followed by further bold actions in subsequent days.

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<sup>80</sup> The uprising was a rebellion of Slovaks (joined by an assortment of other nationalities) who rose up against the Nazi-dominated Slovak state from late August to late October 1944. It was a decidedly Slovak and not a Czech phenomenon, distinguishing the Slovak wartime response from that of the Czech.

<sup>81</sup> J. Luke Ryder, "Slovak Society, the Second World War, and the Search for Slovak 'Stateness'" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2017), 236.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-236.

<sup>83</sup> Husák was a leader in the 1944 uprising yet was imprisoned from 1954-1960 during a Stalinist purge before being rehabilitated and rising to the position of Deputy Premier of Czechoslovakia under Dubček.

<sup>84</sup> "Oslávili výročie SNP," *Ocel' východu*, Sept. 6, 1968.

<sup>85</sup> See Brown, "Socialism with a Slovak Face," 467-495.

<sup>86</sup> Ryder, 230.

*Eastern Steel (Ocel' východu)* newspaper editions from early and mid-September evidence strong worker sympathy for Dubček and his program despite the country's occupation by Soviet forces. A published statement on September 6, 1968 from the factory's Caucus of Party, Union, Youth and Economic Workers declared they had no place for people who vacillated on or rejected Dubček's principles.<sup>87</sup> Another article from the editorial section of the same day's newspaper described how the steel mill's press (used to publish the weekly *Ocel' východu*) was compensating for other presses in town that were occupied by troops and unable to publish. *Ocel' východu* was therefore going to press sometimes twice daily during the early days of the occupation to disseminate news, despite the added expense. For this reason the paper's readership swelled, "Such was the hunger for the written word not only in our factory but also in the city. *Ocel' východu* is found these days even in remote places of the entire republic.... We want and we will always write the truth and again only the truth."<sup>88</sup> The article concludes by pledging allegiance to Dubček and his fellow reformers, "We believe you—believe us!"<sup>89</sup>

What is more, Eastern Slovak Steel workers began voluntarily working on Saturdays to participate in what was known as "Dubček's Shifts" (*Dubčekovské smeny*).<sup>90</sup> They worked overtime to ensure there would be no lack of production due to employees taking time off to protest the invasion, which could be used against them. Referencing the overtime shifts, another *Eastern Steel* article rebuffs a Moscow-based *Pravda (Truth)* article that accused VSŽ workers of being "counter-revolutionary" by stating "our workers even during these difficult days achieve record output."<sup>91</sup>

Steel worker enthusiasm for a reformed version of Communism only grew in the face of occupation. Although just a minority of the 17,000-strong workforce at Eastern Slovak Steelworks expressed their support of democratic socialism before and after the invasion, those who did were remarkably daring in their demonstrations. They threatened strikes, continued to commemorate the Slovak National Uprising, circulated news across the country and even worked Saturdays to maintain production quotas for colleagues who protested the invasion instead of reporting to work. Historian Kevin McDermott describes the gradual progression of Czech and Slovak working class support for "Socialism with a Human Face:"

[I]nitially after January 1968 industrial workers were generally indifferent to reformist ideas, fearing in particular the impact economic reforms might have on employment, the 'de-levelisation' of wages and reduced state price controls.... For most blue-collar workers, the prime issues were higher living standards and wages, security of employment and the right to strike.... But it was the Soviet invasion in August which galvanized Czech and Slovak workers into action. Indeed, together with the students

<sup>87</sup> "Hlásíme sa k dubčekovskej politike," *Ocel' východu*, Sept. 6, 1968.

<sup>88</sup> Jaromír Neuhort, "Pravdu a zas len pravdu!" *Ocel' východu*, Sept. 6, 1968.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "Dubčekovské smeny," *Ocel' východu*, Sept. 13, 1968.

<sup>91</sup> Jaromír Neuhort, "Ohováraním sa družba nepestuje," *Ocel' východu*, Sept. 13, 1968.

they were the most active participants in the national civil resistance to the occupation and the embryonic ‘normalisation’ measures enacted from autumn 1968 onwards.<sup>92</sup>

A prime example of the disillusionment with Communism that many Czechs and Slovaks faced in the wake of August 21, 1968 is that of Ivan Jesenský, high-ranking Communist at the VSŽ steel mill who was imprisoned for misdemeanors committed in the aftermath of the invasion.

### Ivan Jesenský: from Party Trade Union Leader to Subverter

Jesenský, born into a farming family in western Slovakia, learned the steel trade at Ostrava’s mills in the Czech Lands. He quickly rose to membership on Prague’s Steel Trade Union’s Central Committee (*Ústřední výbor odborového svazu hutí*) from 1954-1960, when he was given the position of Head of the Communist Trade Union (ROH) at Eastern Slovak Steelworks in Košice. Jesenský held this position from 1960-1969, when he was removed from office for crimes against the state during the 1968 occupation of Košice by Soviet forces. A Party member from 1948 until he was expelled in 1968, he represents many who embraced socialism in the wake of the Second World War, only to radically oppose it after the 1968 invasion.<sup>93</sup>

The specific “crimes” Jesenský committed refer to the use of his high-ranking position to provide office space at the steel mill for Košice reporters (whose presses had been destroyed by occupying forces) to use the *Eastern Steel* press at Eastern Slovak Steelworks. A post-Communist *Eastern Steel* edition recounts that Jesenský and members of his labor union helped local newspaper, radio and TV editors disseminate information during those crucial days via daily editions of the factory newspaper.<sup>94</sup> They also printed “fliers with an anti-socialist orientation, regarding the



Figure 6: Ivan Jesenský, Jesenský family collection

<sup>92</sup> McDermott, *Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-89*, 130-131.

<sup>93</sup> “Vyšetřovací spis č. ČVS-132/1971 & Trestní spis,” Ústav paměti národa v Bratislave, [duplication and publication permission granted by Roman Jesenský].

<sup>94</sup> Ing. Jozef Kočiš “Vystavení represíám normalizátorov,” *Ocel’ východu*, [date not available].

situation in the city, the region, etc.” Steel worker Jozef Kočiš notes, “All these materials, produced here [at the steel mill], were distributed not only within VSŽ but also in the whole region and some across the republic.”<sup>95</sup> But Jesenský went further. In addition to personally reprimanding the Soviet commander in charge of the city’s occupation, multiple witnesses confirm that he drove a “counter-revolutionary car” around the large factory campus, enabling news about the invasion and occupation to reach thousands of steel workers—even news from “Voice of America.”<sup>96</sup> Although occupying forces jammed radio signals as a means of subduing and oppressing the local population, with the aid of a special transmitter in Jesenský’s car, the signals reached all within range of his car, which even drove the twelve miles from the factory to downtown Košice. His son Roman explained, “They [bosses sympathetic to the regime] couldn’t understand where the signal was coming from on campus.”<sup>97</sup>



Figure 7: Ivan Jesenský with his two sons. Jesenský family collection.

As a result of these provocations, Ivan was sentenced to imprisonment at hard labor for fifteen months in 1971.<sup>98</sup> He was later readmitted to the factory as a menial laborer until his death in 1979. Roman Jesenský, age seven when his father was

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Magdaléna Fecurková, “Spomienky nevybledli” *Ocel’ východu*, 25 Aug. 2008; Roman Jesenský, interview by author, tape recording, Košice, Slovakia, 17 Nov. 2011.

<sup>97</sup> Roman Jesenský, interview by author, tape recording, Košice, Slovakia, 17 Nov. 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Magdaléna Fecurková, “Spomienky nevybledli” *Ocel’ východu*, 25 Aug. 2008.

apprehended for interrogation, remembers, “We lived on Michalovská Street. ŠtB (state security officers) read newspapers in front of our block of flats.... Kids would tease us [Roman and his brother], ‘You have a father in the slammer!’”<sup>99</sup> Ivan died of a heart attack at age forty-nine while on a day trip with his family at eastern Slovakia’s Lake Štrava. After the fall of the regime, VSŽ’s labor union instated the “Ivan Jesenský” memorial in his honor.<sup>100</sup>

While there is no question that Dubček’s leadership was pivotal to Czechoslovakia’s liberalization phenomenon, the participation of ordinary individuals cannot be understated. These include not only Jesenský but also the steel workers who caravanned to the international deliberations at Čierna nad Tisou to

support Dubček or those who worked Saturday shifts at the factory. McDermott contends that the action risked at this time by average citizens is eventually what made the Prague Spring memorable and, feasibly, a model for Gorbachev’s *glasnost* policy of “openness” 20 years later.<sup>101</sup> He notes:

“The Prague Spring was not just a series of reforms elaborated and implemented ‘from above’ by communist politicians. It was also an exhilarating mass undertaking ‘from below,’ tentative at first, but ultimately involving millions of ordinary citizens, many of whom had divergent ideas and beliefs to the party power-holders.”<sup>102</sup>



Figure 8: Košice cathedral at dusk.  
Photo by M. M. Mullins.

Unfortunately, however, all grassroots efforts to institute a kinder version of socialism came to an abrupt end. Indeed, the window of

opportunity for Czechoslovak citizens to flee remained open during the transition from the Dubček administration to that of Husák, who was installed as Czechoslovak Party leader on April 17, 1969. The advent of the Husák regime brought with it the crackdown period of “normalization” which lasted until the

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> “Vyznamenanie in memoriam,” *Ocel’ východu*, [no date available]; Magdaléna Fecurková, “Spomienky nevybledli” *Ocel’ východu*, 25 Aug. 2008.

<sup>101</sup> McDermott, *Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-89*, 203.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 127-128.

system began to crumble in 1988. Thus from 1969-1988 Czechoslovakia remained one of the most tightly-controlled Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

The eastern Slovak experience of the 1968 Prague Spring and subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion and its response contribute to a holistic understanding of this turning point in Czechoslovak history. The region's distinct participation in Czechoslovakia's reform era reached its ultimate culmination when more casualties were recorded in Košice than in any other Slovak city during the August 21, 1968 incursion. Ironically, the Soviets and Brezhnev himself had personally freed the city in 1945 only to return twenty-three years later as oppressors.

Thanks to the expansion of Eastern Slovak Steelworks, Košice had become the fastest-growing city in Czechoslovakia from 1961-1967. Many of the city's 236,000 inhabitants were employed at the steel mill by 1968. Some were conspicuously bold in their support of Dubček before and after the tanks rolled into Liberators' Square. Mass gatherings of workers demanding change within the factory and in town forced VSŽ Director Michal Hanka to blame the "democratization process" as the culprit causing a dip in production rates in the months prior to August 1968.

Yet even after the intimidating soldiers were present, Košice steel workers threatened strikes, publicly observed the anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising, willingly gave their names to reporters as they pledged support to Dubček in newspaper interviews and voluntarily worked Saturday shifts to ensure no lack of production due to their protesting against the invasion. While other newspaper presses were occupied with Soviet troops, *Eastern Steel* went to press twice daily in the early days after the invasion, with a readership that extended far beyond eastern Slovakia. Such significant steel worker participation both during and after the 1968 Soviet invasion reflects a high degree of civil society among Košice's working class. Perhaps it is appropriate that in 2018, the fiftieth anniversary of these seminal Cold War events and the centennial of the inception of Czechoslovakia, the account of those on the eastern periphery is brought to light.

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<sup>103</sup> Sulaček, 59; Williams, 103; Jiří Pehe, ed. *The Prague Spring: A Mixed Legacy* (NY: Freedom House, 1988), 198.

## The Cleveland Czech and Slovak Community's Heartfelt Protest against the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968

Mary Hrabík Šámal

The invasion of their fellow member state Czechoslovakia by five Warsaw Pact nations (only Romania refused participation) on August 20, 1968, engendered protests throughout the world. The non-Communists were especially incensed that the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Hungary had ended Prague's reform movement by force. These protests varied in form and intensity. Perhaps the most heartfelt one took place in Cleveland, Ohio—the city which had the world's the largest number of Slovaks in the early 1900s<sup>1</sup> and the fourth-largest contingent (after Prague, Vienna, and Chicago) of Czechs by birth or ancestry.<sup>2</sup>

### History of the Czech and Slovak settlements

Czechs and Slovaks have a long history in Cleveland. The first settlers from Bohemia arrived in the 1850s. By 1869, there were 669 Czech families in the city. At the turn of the century, Czechs numbered about 10,000. The years 1900-1914 saw the most significant influx of immigrants from Bohemia and Moravia. When one also counts the second generation, Czechs were then the single largest single ethnic minority in the greater Cleveland area i.e., if the suburbs were included (West Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, and Lakewood.) According to some, the number of people of Czech descent reached as much as 100,000.<sup>3</sup> Due to the American immigration policies of the 1920s and the exodus to the suburbs, city officials estimated that the number of Czechs in Greater Cleveland, by 1983, had declined to 37,000.<sup>4</sup>

The Czechs thrived as the city's industry developed and prospered. Undoubtedly, their universal literacy was much to their advantage.<sup>5</sup> They formed their neighborhoods, such as Kuba, Žižkov, Husinec, Praha, Trocnov, Na zahrádce, or Karlov, and enjoyed a life filled with social, religious, cultural, benevolent, nationalist and other organizations. The Czech political scientist and historian Martin Nekola counted some 375 Czech and Czechoslovak organizations and interest groups that existed at this time.<sup>6</sup>

Cleveland also had its share of Czech language press. The first newspaper, *Pokrok*, began publication in 1871. Others, such as *Pestré listy*, *Dennice novověku*, *Americké dělnické listy* and the daily *Američan* followed.<sup>7</sup> *Nový*

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Sabo, "Slovaks," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* in <https://case.edu/ech/articles/>

<sup>2</sup> Martin Nekola, "Zavátá česká stopa v Clevelandu" in <https://dotyk.denik.cz/2016128>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Broadway Area Remains Center of Czechoslovakian Community," *The Plain Dealer*, November 10, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Elementary school education had been compulsory in the Czech lands since 1875.

<sup>6</sup> Nekola, *loc.cit.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*



*Svět*, which served as the main Czechoslovak newspaper for the northern United States, appeared from 1950 to 1977.

The number of Slovaks in Cleveland is more difficult to ascertain than that of Czechs. Before 1918, Slovaks were often counted as “Hungarians,” “Slavonians” or “Slovenes.” Later, after World War I, they were frequently listed as “Czechoslovaks.”

Slovak immigration to Cleveland began in the late 1870s. By the end of World War I, the number of Slovaks in the city was estimated to be about 35,000. For reasons mentioned above, Slovaks, like Czechs, did not emigrate frequently in the inter-war period and after World War II;<sup>8</sup> nevertheless, officials in 1970 estimated that 48,000 persons, Slovak either by birth or ancestry, resided the Greater Cleveland area.<sup>9</sup>

Slovaks originally settled near the Cuyahoga River on East Ninth Street. Later, they also lived along Buckeye Road and streets parallel to it. Some also moved west, especially to the suburb of Lakewood. After World War II, the Cleveland Slovaks joined the exodus to the growing suburbs: Parma, Bedford and Garfield Heights.<sup>10</sup>

In the areas where they were concentrated, the Slovaks established churches. The Catholic parishes included St. Ladislav, Holy Trinity, St. Wendelin, St. Benedict and SS. Cyril and Methodius. Major Catholic orders, particularly the Benedictines, were and are closely associated with this ethnic community. The Slovaks also founded Lutheran and Calvinist churches.<sup>11</sup>

Cleveland Slovaks organized at least three groups that became national in scope: The First Catholic Slovak Union, the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union, and the Slovak League of America. Various fraternal benefit societies merged into the First Catholic Slovak Union in 1890. The First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union was established in 1892.<sup>12</sup> The founding charter of the former organization urged its members to teach their sons the native language and educate them in Slovak traditions.<sup>13</sup> In 1907, the Slovak League of America, an umbrella organization that encompassed all major Slovak organizations in the United States, was also founded in Cleveland.<sup>14</sup> The sociologist Josef Barton concludes that Slovak community’s emphasis on continuity of the ethnic group was based on “an amalgam of religious and associational loyalties.”<sup>15</sup>

Cleveland’s Czechs and Slovak maintained a lively interest in the happenings in the old country. In 1902, Slovaks joined other Slavic groups whose compatriots lived in the Hungarian territory of the Dual Monarchy to oppose the erection of a

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<sup>8</sup> Sabo, *loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American city, 1890-1950*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 147.

<sup>14</sup> Sabo, *loc. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Barton, *op. cit.*, 172.

statue of Louis Kossuth in Cleveland's Public Square.<sup>16</sup> The Slovak League of America and the Czech National Association signed the first document to mention a common state for the Czechs and Slovaks in Cleveland's Bohemian National Hall on October 22, 1915.<sup>17</sup> In 1918, the Pittsburgh Agreement provided more details about the future relationship of the Czechs and Slovak than the Cleveland Agreement. The new state was to be a democratic republic. Slovakia was to have its own official language (Slovak) as well as administration, diet and courts. The people at home and their representatives were to work out the particulars of the relationship later.

Not only did the local Czech and Slovak organizations raised money for the independence movement but also 323 men volunteered to serve in the Czechoslovak Foreign Legion. The Cleveland legionnaires fought in France, Italy, and Russia. Only 150 returned after the war.<sup>18</sup>

During the inter-war period Cleveland's Czechs and Slovaks continued their contacts with the newly forged Czechoslovakia, but their reaction to it differed. The Slovak League of America expressed its bitter disappointment that the promises of the Pittsburgh Declaration had not been kept and vigorously championed the Slovak cause. Philip Hrobak, the president of the League, in his *Slovaks and Czechs* well illustrates his organization's antagonist sentiments toward the Czechoslovak state. He asserts that General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, the Slovak politician, aviator, and Czechoslovakia's Minister of War, died in a plane shot down by a Czech garrison.<sup>19</sup> Hrobak continues:

Masaryk and Dr. Edward Beneš then repudiated the Pittsburgh Pact of May 30, 1918, and Slovakia in fact became a colony of the Czechs.... the will of the Slovak nation was totally ignored when it came to policy and national and international relations.... Masaryk and Beneš did not recognize the national rights and just demands of the Slovak nation, nor did they respect its national and religious traditions—this despite the fact that the establishment of Czecho-Slovak Republic rested on the democratic principle of self-determination.<sup>20</sup>

To the contrary, the Czechs living in the United States viewed the Masaryk and Beneš Republic in a positive light. Those living in Cleveland were no exception. In 1937, F. Vlček, a successful factory owner of Czech origin, was instrumental in the formation of the first *Krajanský Výbor*.<sup>21</sup> He claimed that the idea originated with Jan Masaryk. President Masaryk's son wanted a committee composed of people of

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<sup>16</sup> Sabo, *loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Nekola, *loc. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Philip Hrobak, *The Slovaks and Czechs* (n.p.: Slovak League of America, May 1954) : 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Krajanský Výbor* is challenging to translate into English. The most straightforward translation would be "Countrymen's Committee." To do justice to the Czech, it should be "Countrymen's Committee for Countrymen," In other words, it was an organization of those of Czech descent abroad helping their compatriots remaining in the homeland

Czech descent whose aim would be to aid their countrymen in the homeland. The dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and Nazi occupation cut short Vlček and his friends' efforts. The Czechoslovak community, led by Msgr. Oldřich Zlámál,<sup>22</sup> supported the anti-Nazi struggle, and President Beneš visited the city several times. After the war, Zlámál organized the sending of clothing, medicine, and food to the liberated homeland. Even before the coup d'état of February 26, 1948, Zlámál became aware of the Communist control of his native land and the need to organize against this political development. Along with other leaders of the Czechoslovak community, Zlámál reinstituted the *Krajanský Výbor*. For its English name, they chose "American Committee for the Liberation of Czechoslovakia" the same nomenclature as an organization that had existed after Czechoslovakia had disappeared in March 1939.<sup>23</sup>

Over time, *Krajanský Výbor* became the umbrella organization and spokesman in the northern Ohio area for interests of Czechoslovak descendants. Its membership consisted of both individuals and organizations. The fifteen Czechoslovak groups and clubs in the region were affiliated with it. The Northeastern District of the American Sokol and its local units, as well as the Cleveland units of *Dělnická tělocvičná jednota* (Workers' Gymnastics Union) and the Union of Czech Catholics, played a crucial role in all *Krajanský Výbor*'s significant activities. The local chapter of *Společnost pro vědy a umění* (Society for Arts and Sciences, SVU) also cooperated closely with *Krajanský Výbor*, especially in educational and cultural programs.<sup>24</sup> *Krajanský Výbor* also served as the local chapter of the Chicago-based premier Czechoslovak organization in the United States, *Československá národní rada americká* (Czechoslovak National Council of America) and co-operated in all its endeavors.

Like all post-World War II long-established existing Czechoslovak immigrant communities and their organizations, the American Committee for the Liberation of Czechoslovakia or *Krajanský Výbor* was involved in cultural and charity endeavors, as well as providing support for refugees. In 1948-53, they collected and sent funds, foodstuff and other assistance to refugees in German, Austrian and Italian camp. Their members provided the sponsorship affidavits that American law required for the refugees to be allowed to enter the United States. They also assisted the newcomers in settling in the Greater Cleveland area.

The struggle against Communism and the restoration of a united and democratic Czechoslovakia were not a high priority for the long-established existing Czech immigrant communities and their organizations in the United States; therefore, they rarely undertook any political initiatives. Cleveland's *Krajanský Výbor* was, in the words of the scholar Prokop Tomek, "a rare exception" in this regard.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Oldřich Zlámál, *Povídka mého života* (The story of my life). (Chicago: Tiskárna Českých Benediktinů, 1954).

<sup>23</sup> -un, "Z historie krajanského Clevelandu," mimeograph. Martin Hrabík Family Archive, henceforth referred to as MHFA.

<sup>24</sup> "Přehledná zpráva o činnosti Krajanského výboru v Clevelandě v roce 1975," MHFA.

<sup>25</sup> Prokop Tomek, "The Highs and Lows of Czech and Slovak Émigré Activism," in *Anti-*

In Cleveland, the intent of the founders of Krajanský Výbor, especially Msgr. Oldřich Zlámal and Dr. Alfred Politzer, had been to create an organization to fight against communism in the homeland. In its orientation, Krajanský Výbor was Czechoslovak. It wanted to the unity of the country preserved. While its membership was overwhelmingly Czech; nevertheless, Slovaks were also present and welcomed as long as they supported the continued existence of a common state.

This twin aim of struggle against communism and the preservation of a united Czechoslovakia was congruent with the interests of the post-1948 emigres, who were mostly of former anti-Communist politicians and activists. This convergence of interest between Cleveland's new exiles and the Krajanský Výbor old timers made it easy for the new arrivals to participate in the organization and for the organization to be politically active. Consequently, Krajanský Výbor often made its views known to American politicians, especially in matters of foreign policy having to do with Cold War and the fate of and issues dealing with Radio Free Europe.

The Slovak League of America shared Krajanský Výbor's anti-Communism, but it added to the mix anti-Czech feelings and a desire for greater autonomy or separate state for Slovakia. For example, on December 22, 1956, the Slovak League of America and the Slovak National Council Abroad presented its observation of the developments in Slovakia to the United Nation General Assembly. Entitled "Memorandum concerning the Czech-Communist military intervention in Slovakia," the submission argued that the "Czecho-Slovak" state was artificial and undemocratic. The Slovaks, the memorandum held, had been forced into it against their will in 1945. Ever since, the Prague government had been exercising violence against the Slovaks' without interruption, "with the clear intent of weakening their national resistance to both Communism and Czech domination, aiming thereby to destroy them nationally as an ethnic entity."<sup>26</sup>

### **Protest rallies against the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion**

The reaction of Cleveland Czech/Czechoslovak community to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia was in line with Krajanský Výbor's long-established political activism. Changed circumstances altered the Slovak League's and other Cleveland Slovak organizations' enmity to the Czechoslovak state. The reforms of the Prague Spring had made the country a federal state, and First Secretary of the Communist Party Alexander Dubček was a Slovak, the first ever hold the country's most important post. Andrew Hudak, the President of the North Ohio District of the Slovak League of America, explained to a local newspaper: "For the first time...the

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*Communist Minorities in the U. S.: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees*. Ieva Zake, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 113. Tomek writes that over time political activism cooled as the 1948 refugees assimilated. In Cleveland, it diminished because the refugees died out.

<sup>26</sup> Slovak League of America and the Slovak National Council Abroad, *Memorandum concerning the Czech-Communist military Intervention in Slovakia* "presented to the United Nations General Assembly, December 22, 1956, (Middletown: n. p, 1956).

Czechs and the Slovaks have been united.”<sup>27</sup> Under these new circumstances, the Cleveland Czechs and Slovaks were able to act in unison to condemn the Warsaw pact invasion.

Both the Cleveland Czechoslovak and Slovak communities reacted quickly. Krajanský Výbor’s president Martin Hrabík<sup>28</sup> (1904-1992) immediately fired off telegrams to President Lyndon B. Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, presidential candidates Richard M. Nixon and Hubert H. Humphrey, Senators Eugene McCarthy, Frank J. Lausche, William Fulbright, Eugene McGovern, and Stephen M. Young, as well as members of Congress: Charles A. Vanik, Michael Feighan, William E. Minshall, Frances Bolton and Wayne L. Hays. The message read:

We, the Americans of Czechoslovak descent in Cleveland, appeal to you to do all in your power to aid the people of Czechoslovakia against the brutal invasion of the Soviet Union and its allies. In the name of democracy and freedom, it is impossible to remain inactive.<sup>29</sup>

Hrabík and the other Krajanský Výbor officers also started to plan a public protest. They announced it by word of mouth and in the local Czech daily, *Nový Svět*, on August 22, 1968. Their proclamation, signed by the officers (Martin Hrabík, president, Stasi Kiml, vice president, and Josef Hokr, secretary), read as follows:

Countrymen!

Tuesday night, the invading armies of the Soviet Union and its satellites woke the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia’s towns and hamlets from their peaceful sleep.

Brothers and sisters, our old homeland is suffering.... To humiliate Czechoslovakia, the colonial power, Moscow, has mobilized East Germany, Poland, Hungary and even faraway Bulgaria. This overwhelming invading force of countries whose population count is 300million is attacking a peaceful nation of 14 million.... We must help! Raise your voices, protest, send telegraphs, write! The conscience of the world and freedom must respond!

Come to the protest assembly that KRAJANSKÝ VÝBOR has called for Friday, August 23 at 8 o’clock at the Czech National Hall on Broadway.<sup>30</sup>

This appeal appeared on *Nový Svět* front page in inch and a quarter high letters. Community leaders, as well as Republican and Democratic Party officeholders in the area, were invited to attend and speak at the protest rally. The same issue of the paper urged Czechoslovak organizations in the area, as well as individuals, to send telegrams to President Lyndon B. Johnson and the Secretary-General of the United

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<sup>27</sup> “Ethnic Groups Denounce Actions,” *The Plain Dealer*, Aug. 22, 1968.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Hrabík (1904-1992) was a former Czechoslovak politician. Fearing arrest by the Communists, he left his homeland in February 1948 and settled in Cleveland in 1951.

<sup>29</sup> “Telegrafujme presidentu a tajemníku SN UT Thantovi za lid Československa!” *Nový Svět*, Aug. 22, 1968.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* This and all other translations from the Czech are the author’s.

Nation U Thant. The article gave the addresses of the officials and provided samples of the messages in English that the writers could use.<sup>31</sup>

On the evening of August 23, 1968, according to the *Cleveland News* about 600 people filled the ballroom of the Bohemian National Hall as Master of Ceremony Anthony Šuster, the former director of the Cleveland's Nationalities Center, opened the protest rally. On the curtain behind the speakers' table, the word for "freedom" was inscribed in all the languages of the countries behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>32</sup>

After Margaret Mihok had sung the American national anthem and Ludvík Rychtera, the Czechoslovak one, Rev. John Anděl, the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes parish, offered a prayer for the people of Czechoslovakia. Šuster introduced Ralph J. Perk, Cuyahoga County Auditor and President of the American Nationalities Council of Greater Cleveland and Vice-President of Krajanský Výbor, whose welcoming speech emphasized the unity of all Czechs and Slovaks in the cause of freedom.<sup>33</sup> Then, Perk introduced the various speakers as he called them to the podium. Martin Hrabík, the President of Krajanský Výbor, addressed the assembly in Czech. "Honorable guests, brothers and sisters," he began:

We are gathered here today when the Czechoslovaks are attempting to stop Soviet tanks with nothing else but their bare hands and their own bodies. On the television screens of the entire world, we see the united and spontaneous resistance of the Czechoslovak people against the invaders. The ink has barely dried on the friendship treaties of Čierna and Bratislava, which guaranteed the Czechoslovaks the right to conduct their internal affairs as they saw fit, and already the forces of the signatories representing a population of about three hundred million have attacked and occupied the small Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>34</sup>

Hrabík reminded his audience of the Soviet Union's perfidy. Without regard to its international obligations and the very fundamental laws of human decency, it was destroying the world's only socialist government that had the full support of its people, the solidarity of the Communist bloc and the traditional sympathies the Czechs and Slovaks had had for their Russian brethren. All hope of democratic socialism also perished under the Soviet tanks. Moreover, this Warsaw Pact invasion should unveil the Kremlin's true intentions. "If anyone today," he declared, "were to put trust in the peaceful and democratic aims of the Soviet Union, he must capitulate before the overwhelming logic of the Czechoslovak experience."<sup>35</sup>

On a more emotional and personal note, Hrabík continued: "I am proud of the citizens of my native land. They resisted and are resisting boldly. I am moved to tears by the courage of the Czechoslovak youth. I fear for their lives and safety." He ended his speech with this appeal: "In the name of humanity, we call today to

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Theodore Andrica, "Aid to Czechs is Urged Here," *Cleveland News*, Aug. 24, 1968.

<sup>33</sup> "Krajanský Výbor za lid trpícího Československa," *Nový Svět*, Aug. 29, 1968.

<sup>34</sup> "Martin Hrabík: address to the protest assembly," MHFA.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

the entire world: Help the Czechoslovak people! Help the people whose democratic traditions date several centuries! Help humanity! Help democracy!”<sup>36</sup>

The next two speakers, Republican Members of Congress, Frances Bolton and William E. Minshall, condemned the invasion and saw what happened in Czechoslovakia as a failure of the free world to develop effective policies which would extend the boundaries of freedom, as well as the Johnson-Humphrey administration’s “bridge-building” to Communist nations. In the face of the Warsaw Pact’s violation of Czechoslovakia’s sovereignty, Cong. Charles A. Vanik, a Democrat, declared that conscience now demands that one stand with the people of Czechoslovakia. Carl B. Stokes, the mayor of Cleveland, expressed his outrage that the Soviets and their allies had invaded a civilized country that had given his city so many good citizens.<sup>37</sup>

Theodore Andrica, the Nationalities writer of the *Cleveland Press*, spoke about his very recent trip to Czechoslovakia and its people’s hope for a better life—the hope that the invasion had extinguished. Alexander Mikula, the director of “The Slovak Voice of Cleveland” radio program, pointed out that the Czechs and Slovaks might have had disagreements with each other when times were good, but they will walk hand in hand in the future even during times of trial and tribulation. God be willing, he continued, our homeland, as well as our brothers and sisters, will be free again. Now, we must love each other and work together. Dr. Michal Pap, a professor at John Carroll University and the Director of its Soviet Studies Institute, explained that the world is divided between slaves and those who are free. He asked how much blood had to be shed before the United States learned the history lesson of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary and now Czechoslovakia. Were more lessons necessary? The United Nations should act. The least it could do was to expel the Soviet Union. Raymond Kudukis, Secretary of the American Nationalities Movement of Greater Cleveland also spoke.<sup>38</sup>

Twenty-one leaders of various ethnic groups and their press were present. Stephan Šuhajčík, National Vice-President of the Slovak League of America, an organization with no history of co-operation with the Czechoslovak oriented Krajanský Výbor, had helped organize the protest and spoke at it.<sup>39</sup>

County Auditor Perk read the prepared resolution. It began with the words: “We the citizens of Greater Cleveland here gathered do condemn, solemnly and publicly, before the conscience of the entire world, the brutal, ruthless and unprovoked aggression of the Soviet Union and its allies against the Republic of Czechoslovakia.” It denounced the invasion as a flagrant violation of United Nations Charter to which the Soviet Union, Poland, Poland, and Hungary were signatories as well as an outrage against the principles of sovereignty and self-determination that should govern the relationship between nations. The resolution went on to express fear for the safety and very lives of the Czechoslovak reformers and people. “However, most of all, remembering the tragic fate of the Ukrainians,

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> “Krajanský Výbor za lid trpícího Československa,” *loc.cit.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> “Slovaci proti okupaci Československa,” *Nový Svět*, Aug. 29, 1968.

Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians,” it proclaimed, “we fear for the very existence and survival of the Czechoslovak Republic as a national entity.”<sup>40</sup> The resolution continued:

Therefore, we call upon the United Nations;  
 We call upon each and every freedom-loving nation in the Americas, in Africa, in Europe and Asia;  
 We call upon the President and the Congress of the United States of America;  
 We call upon each and every American city;  
 We call upon men of peace and good will not to let a small nation of 14 million, which desires nothing more than to conduct its own affairs in business, honor, and freedom to be annihilated by the overwhelming force of its enemies.  
 We implore all to spare no effort to affect the immediate withdrawal of the Warsaw Pact troops from the Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>41</sup>

The resolution was loudly and unanimously adopted, and its copies were distributed. The master of ceremonies, Anthony Šuster, then read telegrams from Senator Frank J. Lausche, Congressman Michael A. Feighan, and Rabbi Rudolf M. Rosenthal of the Temple on the Heights, who regretted that they could not attend, but wanted nevertheless to express their whole-hearted support for the Czechoslovak cause. Rev. John Anděl closed the rally with a prayer.<sup>42</sup>

Later, Hrabík received telegrams of support from the Ohio Attorney General, William B. Saxbe, the co-chairman of the Cuyahoga County Republican Party: Robert E. Hughes and Saul G. Stillman, John J. Gilligan, the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, and Sidney Zilber, the chairman of the Jewish Community Relations Committee.<sup>43</sup>

Slovaks scheduled two protest rallies. According to *The Plain Dealer*, the Catholic Slovak Federation scheduled its own assembly on August 25 in Cleveland’s St. Benedict Parish hall at 2940 East Boulevard. The group’s president, Stephen Hudac, was to urge the United Nations to intervene immediately.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of the Slovak League of America’s history of separatist views, *Nový Svět* urged its readers to attend its rally.<sup>45</sup> It was held in St. Wendelin’s Hall on August 29, 1968. The *Plain Dealer* reported that 300 people attended. Officials of the League gathered some 200 signatures on a petition to President Lyndon B.

<sup>40</sup>“Resolution Adopted at the Protest Rally in Cleveland Ohio, on Aug. 23, 1988,” MHFA.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> “Krajanský Výbor za lid trpícího Československa,” *loc. cit.* In his “Memoir,” Hrabík gratefully acknowledges the contributions of others: “The success of the protest meeting is due to the efforts of *Nový Svět* and its editor, Mila Hyvňar, the Czech and Slovak Radio programs, the co-operation of the leaders of the American Nationalities Movement, Ralph Perk and Václav Hyvňar, The late Anthony Šuster very willingly did the needed organizational and propagation work in the English language.” The entries in the “Memoir” are often fragments. It remains unfinished and unpublished.

<sup>43</sup> Telegrams and letters are in MHFA.

<sup>44</sup> “Ethnic Groups denounce Action,” *The Plain Dealer*, Aug. 22, 1968.

<sup>45</sup> “Slováci proti okupaci Československa” *loc.cit.*



Johnson denouncing the invasion. Also, the attendees were encouraged to sign a petition to Secretary of State Dean Rusk barring the Soviet Union from the forthcoming Mexico City Olympics. The organizers also announced that they would ask numerous nations not to participate in the forthcoming Olympics to protest the Warsaw Pact invasions. In his speech, Andrew Hudak, chairman of the Northeastern Ohio Slovak League, stated that his organization wanted to press the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from Czechoslovakia and to restore the Dubcek regime “without Russian strings attached.” Stephen Šuhajčík, Cleveland Utility Commissioner and national vice-president of the Slovak League, declared that the rally would bring national attention to the Russians’ underhanded tactics as they declare themselves in favor of freedom while they crushed and destroyed it as they had done “in Czechoslovakia in 1945, Hungary in 1956 and, as we all know, our fatherland in 1968.”<sup>46</sup> He continued:

We insist that the United States give some sort of positive support to the Czechs. These people are willing to beat back the Russians and fight for democracy—unlike the Vietnamese who don’t know what democracy is and don’t want it. We don’t need to send American boys to fight for Czechoslovakia—the Czechs can do it themselves.<sup>47</sup>

Krajanský Výbor’s president, Martin Hrabík, attended the Slovak rally and spoke at it,<sup>48</sup> as did Ralph J. Perk, the Výbor’s vice-president, County Auditor and chairman of the American Nationalities Movement. Perk in his address concluded that Czech and Slovak unity was at a high point at home and in the United States because of the crisis.<sup>49</sup>

### **The protest continues by other means**

The protest rallies, however, was only the warm-up act. Krajanský Výbor mobilized the Czech/Czechoslovak and Slovak communities to collect signatures for a petition. Supporters stationed themselves at busy crossroads, at shopping centers and on Sundays in front of churches. Permission was secured from the appropriate managers to allow signing in front of the following shopping centers: Eastgate, Severance, Southgate, May Company, Shoregate, Parmatown, Westgate, Brecksville, Turneytown, Mapletown, and Terminal Tower.<sup>50</sup> Since at that time women were rarely employed outside of the home, the organizers asked them to circulate the petitions in front of the shopping centers during the day.<sup>51</sup> The short petition read:

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<sup>46</sup> “Rally Asks Czech Action,” *The Plain Dealer*, Aug. 30, 1968.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Hrabík, “Memoir,” MHFA.

<sup>49</sup> “Rally Asks Czech Action,” *loc. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> “Podpisy byly získávány: u kostelů, na křižovátkách a ve velkých obchodních domech,” MHFA.

<sup>51</sup> “Výzva našim ženám! Potřebujeme podpisy!” *Nový Svět*, Aug. 24, 1968.

We, the American People, protest against the brutal and unprovoked aggression by the Soviet Union and its satellites against the Czechoslovak Republic.

We, the American people, condemn this invasion as a ruthless violation of the right of self-determination and all fundamental human rights. This attack violates the laws of man, nations, and God.

We call upon all Americans from the lowest to those in the highest offices of the land to come to the aid of the Czech and Slovak people for the sake of the freedom and democracy we hold so dear.<sup>52</sup>

There is some dispute about the number of signatures collected. Hrabík in his memoir estimates that it was 10,000.<sup>53</sup> The Plain Dealer put the number at 15,000.<sup>54</sup> Some have put the number as high as 30,000.<sup>55</sup>

Krajanský Výbor also found other ways of publicizing its cause. The Czech daily, *Nový Svět*, edited by Míloslava Hyvnar, and the radio programs at WZAK, where the team of Josef Kocáb and Václav Hyvnar directed the Czech program and Alexander Mikula, the Slovak one, spread the word effectively and repeatedly. At the behest of Joseph Jícha, who donated seed money for this, the organization had bumper stickers with the wording "Free Czechoslovakia!" printed and distributed.<sup>56</sup>

The support of and favorable publicity from highly placed officeholders, some who had attended the protest rally and some who did not, helped the efforts of the Czechoslovak community. On September 4, 1968, Cong. William E. Minshall had the following included in the *Congressional Record* as an extension of his remarks:

I was privileged to join a protest rally at the Bohemian National hall.... It was a moving occasion in which all of us pledged our united efforts to the cause of self-determination for that courageous little nation. I include...the magnificent speech given by Martin Hrabík, the distinguished president of the Committee and the resolution adopted by the assembly at the rally.<sup>57</sup>

Congressman Wayne L. Hays issued a press release stating: "that if the United States State Department had one-tenth of the courage of the plain people of Czechoslovakia, it would immediately break diplomatic relations with Moscow and send every Russian embassy employee back to Russia."<sup>58</sup>

The support of the Ohio legislators extended to matter big and small. After receiving pleas from 40 Czechoslovak nationals visiting the Greater Cleveland area,

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<sup>52</sup> "Proclamation sponsored by the American Committee for the Liberation of Czechoslovakia," MHFA.

<sup>53</sup> Hrabík, "Memoir," MHFA..

<sup>54</sup> "15,000 Here Protest the Czech Takeover," *The Plain Dealer*, Aug. 29, 1968.

<sup>55</sup> -un, "Zemřel věrný Čech přítel mnohých," *Hlas Národa*. November 7.1992 and "Martin Hrabík worked in Ohio for Czechoslovakia's freedom." *The Plain Dealer*. October 24, 1992.

<sup>56</sup> "Nálepky na auta 'Free Czechoslovakia'," *Nový Svět*, October 17, 1968.

<sup>57</sup> *Congressional Record—Extension of Remarks*, September 4, 1968, p. E7657. MHFA.

<sup>58</sup> Cong. Wayne L. Hays, Press Release: Aug. 23, 1968. MHFA.

Cong. Charles Vanik wrote a letter to President Johnson asking that given the “cruel and disheartening occupation” of their homeland that Czechoslovak nationals on visitors' visa be extended asylum and refugee status.<sup>59</sup> Ohio Senator Frank J. Lausche arranged for a delegation to deliver the copies of the petitions bound into the *Black Book of Soviet Shame* to the White House.<sup>60</sup>

### The petitions are brought to the White House

The delegation represented both of the ethnic communities of Greater Cleveland. Martin Hrabík, Miloslava Hyvnar, Ralph J. Perk, Alexander Mikula were the Czech/Czechoslovak contingent. The Slovak group consisted of Stephan Šuhajčík and Andrew Hudak, Jr. Senator Frank J. Lausche accompanied the visitors to the White House. There, on October 3, 1968, they met with foreign policy advisors, W. W. Rostow and N. Davis, who accepted the petitions on behalf of the President. The Cleveland delegation used this opportunity to make the administration aware of its concerns and desired course of action. Rostow and Davis explained and defended the government's position.<sup>61</sup>

While the delegation understood (the memorandum of the meeting noted) that the United States could not go to war to aid Czechoslovakia, they wanted to know the considerations that went into this policy. Mr. Rostow explained that there was no treaty obligation to defend Czechoslovakia. Nor were the West Europeans likely to support such course of action. Moreover, the Czechoslovaks themselves had chosen political rather than military struggle. “We were really in no position to go to war,” Mr. Rostow insisted.<sup>62</sup>

Upon being asked why the United States did not severely curtail economic and cultural relations with the USSR, Rostow and Davis listed the steps that the U.S. had already taken. Rostow also noted that the Soviet Union's principal trade was with Western Europe, which was not ready to impose an economic boycott. The marginal economic relations that the US had with Russia did not “provide a practical instrument to force a change in Soviet policy.” The delegation raised the analogy of Rhodesia, which the UN had sanctioned, and said that the US was more willing to aid Asians and Africans than a “Christian nation in the heart of Europe.”<sup>63</sup>

The visitors proposed that the Soviet Union be barred from the forthcoming Olympic Games in Mexico City. They said that the Olympic Committee had taken such measures against South Africa; therefore, they could also do so against Russia. They had already communicated, the delegation added, with the President of the Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, to that effect.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, the delegation raised the issue that they considered the most pressing and severe: the fate of the refugees from Czechoslovakia. They asked why the

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<sup>59</sup> *Congressional Record—Extension of remarks*, September 4, 1968, p. E7657-8. MHFA.

<sup>60</sup> Hrabík, “Memoir.” MHFA.

<sup>61</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation, Thursday, October 3, 1968,” MHFA.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

American authorities had not welcomed them as speedily as they did the refugees after the 1956 Hungarian uprising and expressed the suspicion that there might be some collusion between the Americans and Russians.<sup>65</sup> According to the official White House conversation summary, Mr. Rustow said that: "he believed that he was in a position to know whether there had been any understanding.... He could say categorically that no responsible American official had entered into any agreement or understanding with the Soviets about Czechoslovakia."<sup>66</sup>

Messrs. Rostow and Davis explained that there were 10,000 immigration numbers available for refugees and only two to three thousands of those have been exhausted. Although US officials were working as quickly as they could, the sticking point was the required processing time. Another problem was that Czechoslovaks in Vienna had not registered for immigrant status and were waiting for the outcome of the crisis before deciding to emigrate.<sup>67</sup>

Lastly, the delegation asked about financial aid to the refugees in Vienna. Private agencies, Mr. Rostow said, were working diligently on that, but he did promise that he would look into the obstacles to entry to the US and financial assistance. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Rostow assured the visitors that he would report their concerns to the President, who, he was certain, wanted to be informed.<sup>68</sup>

The visit to the White House had at least one concrete positive result. A White House aide contacted Ralph J. Perk and Andrew Hudak to inform them that the United States had allocated \$275,000 through the Red Cross to help the Czechoslovak refugees who had fled to Vienna. The aide also told Perk that the White House was clearing immigration bottle necks and increasing the staff at the Consulate in Vienna to hasten the refugees' admission to the United States.<sup>69</sup>

### **Doing what could be done in Cleveland: resettlement of refugees**

Aware that the administration was unable or unwilling to help more, the Cleveland Czech/Czechoslovak community began to concentrate on what was useful and meaningful and could be done in its own backyard. Accordingly, Krajanský Výbor put its efforts into resettling refugees and found a way to honor the memory of Jan Palach, a Czech university student who had immolated himself on January 16, 1969, to protest the invasion.

Krajanský Výbor started working on the refugee resettlement early on. Already on October 17, the activists who belonged to the 1948 émigré generation (Martin Hrabík, Ladislav Voris and Josef Hokr) issued an appeal to their émigré peers to attend the annual commemoration of Czechoslovakia's independence and thus support Výbor's effort on behalf of the newest arrivals. They asked their fellow 1948

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> "U.S. Helping Refugees, Aide tells Czechoslovaks," *The Plain Dealer*, Oct.14, 1968.

immigrants to remember their own struggles after they left Czechoslovakia.<sup>70</sup> The organization publicized that the proceeds from its annual picnic would be used to aid Czech and Slovak refugees. According to *The Plain Dealer*, 1,500 people attended that event.<sup>71</sup> Krajanský Výbor also solicited for donations of money and goods in the Cleveland American and Czechoslovak media,<sup>72</sup> as well as by word of mouth.



Figure 1: In the Greyhound Bus Terminal, Martin Hrabik welcomes refugees to Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Vladimir Pacas and their daughters. *Cleveland Press*, Feb. 14, 1969. Photo by Bill Nehez

To put the aid to refugees on a solid financial footing, Krajanský Výbor established a special fund into which they put profits from the above-mentioned fundraisers and other earmarked contributions. From this account, they funded the necessary expenses (rent for office and storage space as well as utility and telephone payments) for temporary headquarters in the Nový Svět building. Krajanský Výbor also used this fund to cover incidental expenses, such as breakfasts for arrivals, the annual Christmas party for refugee children, etc. The organization, however, spent

<sup>70</sup>“Všem příslušníkům československého exilu,” *Nový Svět*, Oct. 17, 1968.

<sup>71</sup> “Czech Group has Annual Picnic Today,” *The Plain Dealer*, July 13, 1969 and “Picnic is held to aid Czechs,” *loc. cit.*, July 14, 1969.

<sup>72</sup> “Tired Refugees Revived when Glimpsing Cleveland,” *Cleveland Press*, Feb. 14, 1969.

the bulk of this fund making interest free loans to the newcomers. Loans from 1968 to 1971 amounted to \$ 8,335.52.<sup>73</sup> As of December 31, 1972, the refugee fund still had \$2,840 in accounts receivable on its books.<sup>74</sup>

Krajanský Výbor's assistance was not only financial but also eminently practical. Upon a call from the New York-based American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, the local organization's volunteers met the refugees when they arrived and found them temporary places to stay. Initially, it was in private homes. John K. Hyvnar, then teenager son of Václav and Míloslava (Míla) Hyvnar recalls that at one time they had nine people housed in their home. Later, Krajanský Výbor lodged the refugees in hotels since most arrived at night. As soon as possible, the Výbor's members moved the new newcomers into cheap apartments, which they had found and furnished with donated and purchased furniture and household goods. Hyvnar still remembers trying to move a massive refrigerator to the upstairs flat of a duplex. The volunteers also collected clothing and helped to find employment.<sup>75</sup> They also had created a rubric with the translation of the various terms that one might encounter on an employment application.<sup>76</sup> Czech owned firms, such as Davis Bakery, Nylonge Corporation, and Charles Svec, Inc. often hired refugees. The soccer coach from Kent State University offered scholarships.<sup>77</sup>

J.C., a former refugee, explained how the volunteers helped her and her family during the first difficult days in Cleveland:

We have boarded American-Capitol charter plane in Vienna on July 15, 1969, and arrived in New York just few minutes before midnight on the same day. A representative from AFRCR was waiting for us with information that we will travel to Cleveland, Ohio, our final destination, on the next day. We didn't even know where it was located. Without knowledge of the English language, we felt lost.

We arrived in Cleveland at circa 2.00 a.m. July 17, 1969. We were so happy and relieved to find Mr. Rudolph Peřina awaiting us at the bus station. From there he delivered us to a fine hotel (I forgot the name) in downtown Cleveland and promised to pick us up on the next morning. Ahead of time, before our arrival Míla Hyvnar arranged to rent a flat in the house of Mrs. Lillian Houska on East 65th street near Broadway. She was a pleasant and lively 80 years old Czech lady, who greeted us warmly telling her own story how she felt long time ago after her arrival into this foreign country. *Narodní Sň, Nový Svět* (newspaper building), Church of Our Lady of Lourdes were all on Broadway, only walking distance from our location. Some furniture was purchased from Ptak's Furniture store by Krajanský Výbor prior to our arrival for which we paid in installments for next several months. We also received some used items for our household from various Czech

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<sup>73</sup> "Refugee Fund: Loan Account," Krajanský Výbor Papers, Hyvnar Family Archive.; henceforth HFA.

<sup>74</sup> "Pokladní zpráva za rok 1972: Fund pro pomoc uprchlíkům," *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> John K. Hyvnar, telephone interview with author, Oct.7, 20018.

<sup>76</sup> "Važení přátelé! Chceme Vám v rámci svých možností, pomoci," MHFA.

<sup>77</sup> John K. Hyvnar, interview.

people. I remember one Czech lady, Mrs. Douda, who brought a box of pots and pans, kitchen stuff. I still have and use one of the knives she gave me.<sup>78</sup>

Despite having had periods of homesickness, J.C. gives credit to the local Czechoslovak organizations for making so much easier her and her family's happy adjustment life in the United States:

So, we received lot of help and attention from the people who were part of Czech community and Krajanský Výbor. Mr. Peřina returned to visit us on several occasions and lent us a small refrigerator that belonged to his son, who was away at college. Another person who was appointed to help was Mr. Luis Smotek, a recently retired older gentleman. He assisted with finding a first job for my husband. We attended to Krajanský Výbor meetings in the basement of Narodní Síň, and met other Czech families with children, some of whom became our friends for life. We got together often, sharing picnics in parks and on beaches. Our children played while we talked about our worries and hopes in our new existence. We all missed our homes and relatives that we had left behind. But at the same time, we were excited about our future and for being part of such a big free country. Cleveland was an appropriate place to settle down because we felt welcomed and protected by the Czech community. There were many events like theaters, balls, picnics, plays and celebrations organized by Krajanský Výbor and other Czech organizations that we attended often—onward the next 25 years or longer.<sup>79</sup>

By mid-February 1969, over thirty refugees had arrived in Cleveland.<sup>80</sup> In all, approximately about 100 to 150 refugees came to Cleveland.<sup>81</sup> Some stayed there; others used it as a way station and eventually moved away.<sup>82</sup>

### **Doing what could be done in Cleveland: memorial to Jan Palach**

Erecting a memorial to Jan Palach, Hrabík thought, would be an appropriate a final act of resistance to and condemnation of the Warsaw Pact invasion. Two men, who shared his vision, encouraged and helped him: Robert Bohuslav Soumar,<sup>83</sup> his friend from their shared Paris days<sup>84</sup> and at that time an executive officer of the

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<sup>78</sup> J. C., e-mail message to author, Nov. 3, 2018.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> "Tired Refugees Revived when Glimpsing Cleveland," *Cleveland Press*.

<sup>81</sup> "Fond pro pomoc uprchlíkům: Account receivable," HFA. The author calculated this on the basis of a list of those who still owed money to the refuge fund in 1973. To those 52 individuals, she added an estimate for spouses, children and those who had repaid their loans.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with John K. Hynar.

<sup>83</sup> See Hrabík, "Robert Bohuslav Soumar zemřel." *Nový Svět*, n. d., MHFA; Jaroslav Pecháček, "Návratu do vlasti se nedočekal...Bohumil Soumar," *Novina*, 24, June 1973 :87-88; Marie Šámalová, "S hlubokým smutkem...", *ibid.*: 88-89.

<sup>84</sup> See Mary Hrabík Šámal. "In Search of Vindication and Liberation: The Czechoslovak Republican (Agrarian) Party in Exile during the Paris Years (1948-1951), *Kosmas: Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, 27, no.2 (Spring2014)/28, no.1 (Fall 2014): 102-128.

International Peasant Union (IPU), and Adolf Wenzbauer, a 1948 émigré, who had settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

While attending 1970 conferences in Europe, Soumar was part of the IPU delegation that had laid a wreath at the Jan Palach statue in Rome. At that time, this was the only memorial of this kind in the world. Palach statue, the work of Italian sculptor Vitorio Cabertaldo, and its surroundings impressed Soumar. The city had renamed the former “Villaggio Olimpico” “Piazza Jan Palach” and the street leading to the square “Via Cescoslovacchia.” Soumar began a campaign to erect a similar memorial somewhere in the Free World. First, he thought it should be in Europe. Later, he decided that North America would be more appropriate because more Czechoslovak immigrants and their descendants lived there than in Western Europe.<sup>85</sup>

Soumar cautioned Hrabík that Palach should not be honored in the stereotypical ways of the Czechoslovak community in North America, i.e.:

We meet, commemorate the significant date, invite a speaker to help us remember, drink a couple beers and go home and then find out from our ethnic press that the success of the event was so much greater than what we had witnessed. Rather than to inspire us to act, our ethnic life puts us to sleep.<sup>86</sup>

Soumar advocated building a memorial to Palach because “it presents many opportunities to tell the world, especially its youth, about the ideals that young people at home and in the all Communist countries espouse.” He exhorted Hrabík: “We must do this; nobody else will do it for us.”<sup>87</sup>

Adolf Wenzbauer, a post-1948 Czech immigrant to Canada and a fervent Palach admirer,<sup>88</sup> had similar ideas. He had presented a statue of the martyr to the city of Winnipeg to commemorate the 100th anniversary and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the local Canadian Czechoslovak Association’s existence.<sup>89</sup> The sculpture by Josef Randa (1933-2005), a post-1968-émigré,<sup>90</sup> was unveiled during the Citizenship Council of Manitoba’s 1972 Remembrance Day Service and then placed in the Winnipeg International Center.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Robert Bohuslav Soumar to Hrabík, Sept. 27, 1971.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> In 1969 and 1970, Wenzbauer had managed to visit Palach’s mother in Czechoslovakia, but in 1971 he was detained at the Prague airport, interrogated and sent back to Canada forthwith. He, nevertheless, maintained a correspondence with Mrs. Palach until her death. Adolf Wenzbauer to Hrabík, March 15, 1972.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, and “Citizenship Council of Manitoba: Remembrance Day Memorial Service: November 12, 1972, Programme.” MHFA.

<sup>90</sup> In Czechoslovakia, Josef Randa studied at sculpture and drawing at UMPRUM. He partook in the restoration of Prague’s National Theater and worked on the fountain of the Czechoslovak Pavilion at the Montreal international Exhibition.

<sup>91</sup> Wenzbauer to Hrabík, March 15, 1972 and “Citizenship Council of Manitoba:



To garner support for a permanent Palach memorial in Cleveland, Hrabík as President of *Krajanský Výbor*, along with Přemek Kocian, the secretary of the organization, planned an "Evening of Jan Palach" to be held on April 21, 1972 at the Czech National Hall. They invited all Czechs and Slovaks, scheduled appropriate recitations and a skit, a main address by Soumar and a short film of Palach's funeral.<sup>92</sup> Unfortunately, Soumar suffered a heart attack in the New York airport, was rushed to the hospital and never made it to Cleveland. In his memoir, Hrabík writes: "I could do nothing else that evening but to take Soumar's place and speak about Palach myself. At the end of my address, I called for the establishment of a committee to erect a memorial."<sup>93</sup>

George Traub, the former secretary of Sparta, the Prague soccer club, was elected treasurer of the committee. He accepted the post and immediately donated \$100; the other committee members each pledged \$25.<sup>94</sup> The project moved ahead quickly after Wenzbauer offered the committee a casting of the Winnipeg Palach statue. He assured the recipients that what was being given to Cleveland was one of the only two castings ever made. The other, of course, was on display in Winnipeg.<sup>95</sup>

Since the statue was made of a material that could not withstand permanent outdoor display,<sup>96</sup> its exhibition in the Czech section of Cleveland's Cultural Gardens was not possible. The organizers approached Dr. Fern Long,<sup>97</sup> the Deputy Director of the Cleveland Public Library, who, although American-born, had earned her doctorate at Prague's Charles University. Through her good offices, a fitting place was found in the Main Library on Superior Avenue in downtown Cleveland. Hrabík then formally offered the statue to the Library.<sup>98</sup> After the Library had conducted a review of the esthetic appropriateness of the statue, the institution accepted the gift.<sup>99</sup>

*Krajanský Výbor* send out about two hundred invitations to the free concert and presentation ceremony.<sup>100</sup> It also asked its ladies to come dressed in national costumes and to provide refreshments for the event, which was opened to the public.<sup>101</sup> On April 6, 1973, Library Director Walter W. Curley's welcoming speech opened the presentation ceremony in the Main Public Library's auditorium, where

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Remembrance Day Memorial Service: November 12, 1972, Programme." MHFA.

<sup>92</sup> "Večer Jana Palacha," *Nový Svět*, n. d., MHFA; Hrabík to Soumar, April 7, 1972. MHFA.

<sup>93</sup> Hrabík "Memoir," MHFA.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Wenzbauer to Soumar, March 25, 1972. MHFA.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. "Meet Fern Long: She Made the Library Opportunity Land," *The Plain Dealer*, July 7, 1960 and "Fern Long Closes Book on 36-year Library Career," *ibid.*, Dec. 25, 1975.

<sup>98</sup> Hrabík to Walter W. Curley, n.d. MHFA.

<sup>99</sup> Hrabík to Josef Randa, Jan. 11, 1972. MHFA.

<sup>100</sup> Hrabík, "Vážení přátelé, *Krajanský Výbor* mne pověřil, abych Vás informoval..." MHFA. The list of those invited is attached to the letter.

<sup>101</sup> "V pátek 6. dubna v 7:30 večer se shromáždíme v auditoriu k odhalení sochý Jana Palacha..." *Nový Svět*, March 30, 1973.

300 people had gathered.<sup>102</sup> Pianist Antonín Kubálek,<sup>103</sup> another post-1968 émigré, played Cesar Franck's "Prelude, Chorale and Fugue," as well as selections from Jan Hugo Voříšek's "Fantasie, opus 12" and Bedřich Smetana's "Czech Dances."<sup>104</sup>



Figure 2: A casting of this statue was installed in the Main Cleveland Public Library on April 6, 1973.

The second half of the ceremony took place in the Library's Fine Arts Department. Cleveland Mayor Ralph Perk formally presented the Palach statue to the Library "on behalf of Krajanský Výbor and the entire Czech and Slovak community." As the sculptor Josef Randa, invited from Winnipeg, watched, Miss

<sup>102</sup> "První socha Jana Palacha ve Spojených Statech slavnostně odhalena v historické Cleveland Public Library," *Nový Svět*, April 13, 1973.

<sup>103</sup> Antonín Kubálek had studied at the Prague conservatory and at Academy of Musical Studies of Charles University. He left Czechoslovakia in 1968 and emigrated to Canada. Kubálek has been a frequent guest of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and has recorded with Golden Crest and MMO in New York. He has performed in solo, chamber and orchestral concerts. "Český klavírní umělec Antonín Kubálek," *Nový Svět*, March 30, 1973.

<sup>104</sup> Wilma Salisbury, "Czech who set self afire to be honored," *The Plain Dealer*, April 4, 1973.

Shirley Jeanette Šorejs, wearing a Czech national costume, and Ms. Filomena Cvičela, in a Slovak one, unveiled his oeuvre. Two wreaths stood at the base of the statue: one from Krajanský Výbor and the other from the Hungarian Freedom Fighters Association. The former was decorated with red, white and blue ribbons, the Czechoslovak national colors. The latter's band bore the inscription: "In homage to our brother fallen in the cause of freedom."<sup>105</sup> Dr. Fern Long began her acceptance speech by saying:

It is my privilege to accept this symbolic figure of Jan Palach. The Czechs have presented it to the Cleveland Public Library because they feel that this institution is the right place to house a memorial to the university student who destroyed himself in the very flower of his youth when he realized that he could not endure life without freedom of the mind and freedom of the spirit. A free public library is the natural home of both those freedoms.<sup>106</sup>

Then, Dr. Long detailed Palach's deed and assessed its far-reaching consequences.<sup>107</sup> She ended her speech with the following: "And here in Cleveland, in a library which Palach never heard of, we are remembering and acknowledging what he has become—a symbol of man's unquenchable longing for freedom, even when the way to it leads through the flames which consume all else but the spirit."<sup>108</sup> The evening of the dedication of the first memorial to Jan Palach on United States soil ended with refreshments that the ladies of Krajanský Výbor had prepared.<sup>109</sup>

Although Cleveland's Czech and Slovak communities did not achieve their ultimate aim, direct intervention on the part of the United States and its allies to help for the Czechoslovak people after the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, their noteworthy and assiduous efforts did bear fruit. The local Slovak and Czech/Czechoslovak ethnic organizations, despite of their past antagonism, worked together in this matter. They mobilized their members, as well as others, to attend rallies, distribute petitions, write letters in protest,<sup>110</sup> and help the Czech and Slovak refugees in myriad ways; moreover, they engaged American politicians at every level of government up to the White House itself in their cause. The ceremonial placement of the memorial to Jan Palach in Cleveland's Main Public Library ensures that their condemnation of the Warsaw Pact's military suppression of the Prague Spring and their devotion to freedom and democracy would be remembered. Cleveland's Slovak and Czech/Czechoslovak ethnic organizations, Martin Hrabík in his memoir concluded, "did shake the consciences of all good men, but the impotence of the United States, now fully engaged in a war in Vietnam that had limited support at home, dulled their effectiveness."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> "První socha Jana Palacha ve Spojených Statech," *Nový Svět*, April 13, 1973.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Hrabík, "Memoir."

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

## ESSAY

### Remembering World War II: The Czech Story

Ben Fox

#### Introduction

This year I have been fortunate enough to have found myself studying in Prague at Charles University on an Erasmus placement. Although my course focuses traditionally on International Relations, the wide range of courses on offer here have allowed me to deviate away from my core area. Previously, I have had very limited opportunities to study a country under Nazi occupation. My education, a British education, mainly focused on Britain's role and the 'how we won the war' narrative. The 1938 Munich Pact was hardly mentioned... not surprisingly. So, when I came across a module which focused on the Second World War and Czechoslovakia's story, I jumped at it.

There is, however, another reason for my interest in the Czech narrative. My grandparents were Czechoslovakians who hailed from Mariánské Lázně, a small spa town in the north-west of the Czech Republic. The area was quickly becoming a disputed territory, with a high ethnic German population making claim to the land. My grandparents, foreseeing the rising tensions in the Sudetenland, cobbled together some British passports and fled to London in 1937. By 1938 the Sudetenland was under German rule and by 1939 the whole of Czechoslovakia was occupied by Nazi forces. Now I want to explore the issue of remembrance from the various historical sites that I have visited, using both first hand experiences and academic sources.

#### Reading first

One of the perks of being affiliated with a university rather than being a tourist is that I have had exposure to some important literature on the matter. Both Tomáš Sniegoň's *Vanished History: The Holocaust in Czech and Slovak Historical Culture* and Michal Frankl's *The Sheep of Lidice: The Holocaust and the Construction of Czech National History* paint a very vivid image of Czech remembrance.

We were first handed Sniegoň's work. I was particularly interested to read about the controversial Lety camp and the struggle to remove a pig farm, now on the former site, in order to replace it with a fitting monument. Frankl, on the other hand, focuses more on the Holocaust and makes two interesting observations in his work. Firstly, he counterposes the remembrance of Lidice with the remembrance of the Jewish ghetto at Terezin. More importantly, he points out how the massacre at Lidice has emerged as the dominant narrative and as such the suffering at Theresienstadt has fallen to the side. The second observation he posits is that under communist rule Holocaust memorial was confined to Jewish spaces. Furthermore, with the murder of some 80,000 Czechoslovakian Jews, in combination those who

fled or emigrated, there was not a large Jewish community left to remember it. The result, very limited representation for the horrors of the Holocaust.

My trip to Terezin really opened my eyes the issues of remembrance here in the Czech Republic. The first challenge was finding the correct bus bay, after consulting the boards I found a bus which had stops marked Terezin A and Terezin B. The route was named after the terminal stop, unhelpfully. Then the bus arrived, I remember a big sign hung above the driver with the words 'The driver is not a tour guide; the driver will only speak Czech.' When the bus finally arrived in Terezin, there was no announcement or signal that this was the place to get off, after all the board had shown two stops in Terezin. I decided to get off at the first stop rather than risk it: of course I'd gotten off early and I had to walk the half mile down the main road to the main site.



*Figure 1: The Little Fort at Terezin (all photos by Ben Fox)*

### **The Lidice narrative**

My visit to Lidice was very enlightening on the matter of remembrance. The exhibits were interactive. The first, an informative documentary, counterposed the tranquillity of country life with the horrors of the massacre. Old photographs of the village's residents vividly painted an image of life in Lidice. Archive footage transported you to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lidice and Prague.

The place was a hub of activity. Gardeners seemed to be busy everywhere, cutting grass, lopping trees and pruning the rose garden. The site seemed beautifully maintained. Evidence of state funding was very apparent here, as well as international influence. The rose garden boasted more than 160 roses from countries

across the world. There was also a monument to cities destroyed all over Europe and Japan. There was a clear effort to put Lidice on the global map as a place of historical significance.



Figure 2: Lidice, L to R, Entrance, Rose Garden, Children's memorial

### Rising Czech nationalism?

The narrative of the Heydrich assassination and the massacre at Lidice certainly paints the Czechs in strong and noble light. Perhaps given Czechoslovakia's submission to Nazi rule without an armed conflict—as opposed to neighbouring Poland—there is some need to demonstrate a clear opposition to the occupation? Perhaps in the decades since the occupation there is some fear of being named as a state who was passive in response to Nazi occupation? Even with Poland's armed resistance to the invasion the government still felt the need to introduce its highly controversial Holocaust law, which explicitly states it is a crime to suggest the Polish government collaborated in the war crimes committed by their Nazi occupiers. Clearly projecting and maintaining a strong resistance image is very important in this part of Europe.

### The peculiar case of Petschek's Palace

One of the more obscure monuments to the resistance of the occupation is the museum at Petschek's palace. The building once housed the Gestapo headquarters for Bohemia and Moravia. It has since been reclaimed by the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade. However, hidden away in the basement is a memorial to the civilians who were captured and tortured there. Save for a commemorative plaque on the outside of the building, even the most street-wise Prague citizen may walk



right past the building without knowing its historical significance.

The memorial to these brave Czech heroes was certainly underwhelming. It was hard to understand the target audience for the exhibits. The tour, only in Czech, was relatively brief and not particularly interactive. Furthermore, the process to





organise a tour seemed very confusing. I think it unlikely that many visitors to Prague would ever come across this interesting narrative of resistance. This of course suggests that the issue of remembrance does not appear to one that is aimed at a certain section of Czechoslovak society. The lack of proper recognition if anything perhaps demonstrates the effects of communist rule. As Sniegoń notes, under communist rule a policy of reclamation occurred. The Little Fort at Terezin was used as a military facility after the war, Petschek's Palace was reclaimed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the site of the Lety camp became a pig farm. This perhaps explains the imbalance of remembrance in the Czech Republic.

### The question of Czech representation

Firstly, it is worth noting that the sporadic nature of Czech World War II remembrance is not necessarily unique. Nor do I think its anti-Semitic. I think this is too simplistic. Yes, there is scarce representation of the 80,000 Czech Jews who were deported and executed. However, as I have explained there is questionable representation of Czechs and other ethnic groups persecuted under Nazi rule. This is perhaps not surprising given the period of communist rule post war; a period of silence. Arguably, the result has been a confusing mash up of on the one hand a lack of individual representation but also an element of inclusive unity. This inclusiveness feeds into an 'us vs. them' mentality which pits Czechs and Slovaks against their invaders. Still personally I think the government needs to do more. Perhaps the increasingly diplomatic relationship with Israel will lead the Czech government to engage more actively in Holocaust remembrance. Of course, the issue of



underrepresentation is still a very topical one; especially amongst the Romani community.

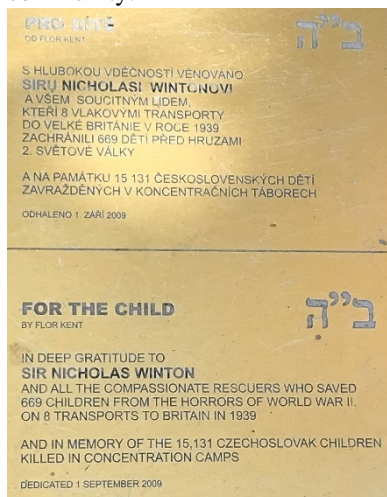


Figure 3, 4, 5: Memorials to the children saved by Nicholas Winton's transports and in memory of the Czechoslovak children killed in concentration camps

Secondly, it must be noted that it is hard to quantify the effect that the government or the media has played in portraying this narrative. Is it in our human nature to connect more with tales of national heroism than tragedy?

I think we like a 'goodies vs baddies' story where the villains and heroes are easily identifiable, without any blurred lines between the two. Perhaps the heroic nature of the assassins' story counterposed with the tragedy of the Lidice massacre makes for a better 'Hollywood' narrative. In literal terms this story has been the subject of two films, most notably the 2016 adaptation 'Operation Anthropoid' starring Cillian Murphy. If this portrayal of Czech heroism has been nurtured by the Czech public and the authority is it any surprise that this is the dominant narrative? Furthermore, is it surprising that this the story which is exported to the world?

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## RESEARCH MATERIALS

### Nobel Prize Winners of Czech or Slovak Ancestry

Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr.

#### Introduction

The Nobel Prize is an international monetary prize. The award was established by the 1895 will and estate of Swedish chemist and inventor Alfred Nobel (1833-1896). It was first awarded in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, and Peace in 1901. An associated prize, The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, was instituted by Sweden's central bank in 1968 and first awarded in 1969. The Nobel Prizes in the specific disciplines (physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, and literature) and the Prize in Economics, which is commonly identified with them, are widely regarded as the most prestigious award one can receive in those fields.<sup>1</sup>

In 1888 Alfred Nobel's brother Ludvig (1831-1888)<sup>2</sup> died while visiting Cannes and a French newspaper erroneously published Alfred's obituary. It condemned him for his invention of dynamite and is said to have brought about his decision to leave a better legacy after his death. The obituary stated: "Le marchand de la mort est mort" (The merchant of death is dead) and went on to say, "Dr. Alfred Nobel, who became rich by finding ways to kill more people faster than ever before, died yesterday." On November 27, 1895, at the Swedish-Norwegian Club in Paris, Nobel signed his last will and testament and set aside the bulk of his estate to establish the Nobel Prizes, to be awarded annually without distinction of nationality. He died of a stroke on December 10, 1896 at Sanremo, Italy. After taxes and bequests to individuals, Nobel's will gave 31,225,000 Swedish kronor (equivalent to about 1.8 billion kronor or 250 million US dollars in 2008) to fund the prizes.

Generally, it has been thought that only two Czechs have won this prestigious prize, namely Jaroslav Heyrovsky (1890-1967) in chemistry in 1959 and Jaroslav Seifert (1901-1986) in literature in 1984. This paper will demonstrate that there have been other Czech natives, as well as one Slovak native who received this prize and even a larger number of Czech and Slovak descendants abroad.

#### Statistics

There were actually seven individuals born on the territory of former Czechoslovakia, six in the Czech part and one in Slovakia, who received Nobel

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<sup>1</sup> Henrik Schück, Ragnar Sohlman, Anders Österling, Carl Gustaf Bernhard, the Nobel Foundation, and Wilhelm Odelberg, eds. *Nobel: The Man and His Prizes*. 1950. 3rd ed. Coordinating Ed., Wilhelm Odelberg, (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Company, Inc., 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Robert W. Tolf, *The Russian Rockefellers: The Saga of the Nobel Family and the Russian Oil Industry*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976).

prizes. The remaining Nobel laureates with Czech or Slovak roots were all born abroad. The detailed statistics are given below.

*By Ancestry*

Czech Lands – 21

Slovakia - 5

*By Place of Birth*

Bohemia & Moravia – 6

Slovakia – 1

Austria – 10

Croatia – 1

South Africa – 1

Switzerland – 1

US – 6

*By Gender*

Males – 23

Females – 3

*By Subject Area*

Peace – 1

Physics – 7

Chemistry – 8

Physiology & Medicine – 6

Literature – 2

Economics – 2

## Chronology

The order in which the Nobel Prize awards have been given to individuals of Czech or Slovak roots is shown in Table 1. The first two prizes were awarded in 1905. Two prizes were also awarded in 1947, 1973 and 2013, and three prizes in 2004. In the following years: 1925, 1930, 1939, 1945, 1952, 1959, 1962, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1984, 1989, 1996, 1998 and 2007 one prize was given each.

Table 1. The Nobel Prize Laureates with Czech or Slovak Roots

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Institution</i>
Bertha von Suttner	1905	Peace	none
Philipp E. Lenard	1905	Physics	U. Heidelberg
Richard A. Zsigmondy	1925	Chemistry	U. Göttingen
Karl Landsteiner	1930	Physiology or Medicine	Rockefeller Univ.

Leopold Růžička	1939	Chemistry	ETH, Zurich
Wolfgang E. Pauli	1945	Physics	Princeton U.
Carl F. Cori	1947	Physiol. or Med.	Roswell Park Cancer Inst., Buffalo
Gerta T. Cori	1947	Physiol. & Med.	Roswell Park Cancer Inst., Buffalo
Felix Bloch	1952	Physics	Harvard University
Jaroslav Heyrovský	1959	Chemistry	Charles University
Max F. Perutz	1962	Chemistry	Cambridge
Konrad Z. Lorenz	1973	Physiol. or Med.	Max Planck Inst. of Behavioral Physiology
Karl v. Frisch	1973	Physiol. or Med.	Munich University
Frederick A. Hayek	1974	Economics	Salzburg University
D. C. Gajdusek	1976	Physiol. & Med.	N.I.H., Bethesda
Herbert Simon	1978	Economics	Carnegie Mellon U.
Jaroslav Seifert	1984	Literature	none
Thomas Čech	1989	Chemistry	University of Colorado
Dougals D. Osheroff	1996	Physics	Cornell University
Walter Kohn	1998	Chemistry	UC Santa Barbara
H. David Politzer	2004	Physics	California Institute of Technology
David J. Gross	2004	Physics	Princeton University
Elfriede Jelinek	2004	Literature	None
Peter Grünberg	2007	Physics	Research Center Jülich
Martin Karplus	2013	Chemistry	Harvard University
Michael Levitt	2013	Chemistry	Stanford University

### Biographies of Laureates by Award Area

#### *Peace*

**Bertha Felicie Sophie Suttner** (née Countess Kinský of Wchinitz and Tettau (1843-1914), b. Prague, Bohemia, a novelist, was one of the first notable woman pacifists. Her major novel, *Die Waffen nieder!* (1889; Lay Down Your Arms!), has been compared in popularity and influence with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The daughter of an impoverished Austrian field marshal, she was a governess to the wealthy Suttner family from 1873. In 1876 Bertha Kinský became Alfred Nobel's secretary but after only a brief stay left him to marry her old love, Baron Arthur Gundaccar von Suttner. Though her personal

contact with Alfred Nobel had been brief, she corresponded with him until his death in 1896. Bertha von Suttner was awarded the 1905 Nobel Peace prize, “for her sincere peace activities.” Their last meeting (August 1892, Zürich) followed a peace congress in Bern in which she had taken part. It is believed that her increasing identification with the peace movement (in 1891 she founded an Austrian pacifist organization) and her letters on the subject to Nobel caused him to include a peace prize among the awards for which he provided in his will.<sup>3</sup>

### *Chemistry*

**Richard Adolf Zsigmondy** (1865-1929), was a Vienna native, born of Slovak father. He was a chemist who received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1925 for research on colloids, i.e., “for or his demonstration of the heterogenous nature of colloid solutions and for the methods he used, which have since become fundamental in modern colloid chemistry.” He invented the ultramicroscope in the pursuit of his research.

He began his academic career at the University of Vienna Medical Faculty, but soon moved to the Technical University of Vienna, and later to the University of Munich, to study chemistry under Wilhelm von Miller. After receiving his doctorate from the University of Munich in 1889, Zsigmondy worked in research at Berlin and then joined the faculty of the University of Graz, Austria. During his stay in Graz, Zsigmondy accomplished his most notable research work, on the chemistry of colloids. The exact mechanism which yields the red color of the Cranberry or Ruby glass was a result of his studies of colloids. In later years he worked on gold hydrosols and used them to characterize protein solutions. While in Jena he developed the slit ultramicroscope together with Henry Siedentopf.

From 1908 to 1929 he was director of the Institute for Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Göttingen. After moving to Göttingen, Zsigmondy improved his optical equipment for the observation of finest nanoparticles suspended in liquid solution. As a result, he introduced the immersion ultramicroscope in 1912.<sup>4</sup>

**Leopold Růžička** (1887-1976); native of Vukovar, Croatia, was of Czech ancestry, as his name clearly shows. His grandfather was a tailor from Klatovy, Bohemia, from where he emigrated in 1817. Leopold was a fairly good pupil in a

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<sup>3</sup> Bertha von Suttner, *Memoirs of Bertha von Suttner: The Records of an Eventful Life* (Authorized Translation). (Boston and London: Ginn & Co., Published for the International School of Peace, 1910); Irwin Abrams, “Bertha von Suttner and the Nobel Peace Prize,” *Journal of Central European Affairs*, 22, No. 3 (October, 1962), pp. 286-307; Caroline E., Playne, *Bertha von Suttner and the Struggle to Avert the World War*, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1936); *Nobel Lectures, Peace 1901-1925*, Edited by Frederick W. Haberman, (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Co., 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Grandin, ed., “Richard Adolf Zsigmondy Biography,” *Les Prix Nobel*. (The Nobel Foundation, 1925); “Richard Adolf Zsigmondy: Properties of Colloids,” *Nobel Lectures, Chemistry 1922-1941*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1966); J. Reitstötter, “Richard Zsigmondy,” *Journal Colloid & Polymer Science* 211, No. 1-2 (1966), pp. 6-7.

general way, but really interested only in physics and mathematics. The other subjects, including the purely descriptive sciences, left him cold. There was no chemistry in the curriculum but, nevertheless, he decided to study this subject out of his interest in the composition of natural products.

He wanted to study at the Zurich Polytechnic Institute but found to his dismay that an entrance examination was required not only in chemistry but also in descriptive geometry. He decided to go instead to Germany, where anyone with a completed secondary school education was acceptable as a student at a University or Technical Institute without having to undergo additional entrance examinations. He chose the Technische Hochschule at Karlsruhe, where he began his chemical studies in 1906. This step proved to be decisive for his future. Only later did he discover that in Zurich the curriculum, including practical work, was organized on a very rigid basis; still in 1906 attendance at the lectures was or could be checked. In Karlsruhe, on the other hand, there was considerable freedom. He completed his laboratory courses in one and three quarters years and then immediately started his doctoral work on ketenes with Professor Staudinger, who was, at 27, only six and half years older. There were few bureaucratic formalities; he had attended the prescribed lectures neither in chemical technology nor, unfortunately, in physical chemistry and physics.

After two years of research work Růžička was a "Dipl. Ing." and two weeks later "Dr. Ing." Staudinger appointed him as his assistant, and they together entered the quite unexplored field of the active constituents - named by them pyrethrins—of Dalmatian insect powder, a plant product, toxic to insects and other coldblooded animals. They thus opened a new chapter of alicyclic chemistry, which was then as unfamiliar to Růžička as it was to Staudinger.

In 1916-1917, he received the support of the oldest perfume manufacturer in the world Haarman & Reimer, of Holzminden in Germany. With expertise in the terpene field, he became senior lecturer in 1918, and in 1923, honorary professor at the ETH (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule) as well the University in Zurich. Here, with a group of his doctoral students, he proved the structure and existence of the compounds of muscone and civet, the scents derived from the musk deer and the civet cat. The Růžička large ring synthesis is a method in organic chemistry for the organic synthesis of these type of compounds.

In 1921, the Geneva perfume manufacturers Chuit & Naef asked him to collaborate. Working here, Růžička achieved financial independence, but not as big as he did plan so he left Zurich to start working for the Ciba, Basel- based company. In 1927, he took over the organic chemistry chair at Utrecht University in Netherlands. In Netherlands he remained for three years, and then returned to Switzerland, which was superior in its chemical industry. Back to Zurich, at ETH he became professor of organic chemistry and started the most brilliant period of his professional career. He widened the area of his research, adding to it the chemistry of higher terpenes and steroids. After the successful synthesis of sex hormones (androsterone and testosterone), his laboratory became the world center

of organic chemistry. For the latter work, in 1939, he won the Nobel Prize for chemistry.<sup>5</sup>

**Jaroslav Heyrovský** (1890-1967), b. Prague, Czech., was the fifth child of Leopold Heyrovský, Professor of Roman Law at the Czech University of Prague, and his wife Clara, née Hanl.

He obtained his early education at secondary school till 1909 when he began his study of chemistry, physics and mathematics at the Czech University, Prague. From 1910 to 1914 he continued his studies at University College, London, under Professors Sir William Ramsay, W.C.Mc.C. Lewis and F.G. Donnan, taking his B.Sc. degree in 1913. He was particularly interested in working with Professor Donnan, on electrochemistry.

During the First World War Heyrovský did his war service in a military hospital as dispensing chemist and radiologist, which enabled him to continue his studies and to take his Ph.D. degree in Prague in 1918 and D.Sc. in London in 1921.

After holding several posts at the Charles University, he became professor and director of the department of physical chemistry (1926–54), and he was director of the Polarography Institute at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1950, 1952–63).

The work that eventually led to the discovery of polarography, for which he was awarded Nobel Prize in 1959, was begun in London. Polarography is an instrumental method of chemical analysis used for qualitative and quantitative determinations of reducible or oxidizable substances. Heyrovský's instrument measures the current that flows when a predetermined potential is applied to two electrodes immersed in the solution to be analyzed. Within 10 years of the demonstration of the first polarograph (1924) the method was in common use. Heyrovský's monograph *Polarographie* appeared in 1941.<sup>6</sup>

**Max Ferdinand Perutz** (1914-2002), a native of Vienna, Austria, was a descendant of the Perutz family from Prague. Both his parents, Hugo Perutz and Dely Goldschmidt, came from families of textile manufacturers who had made their fortune in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the introduction of mechanical spinning and weaving into the Austrian monarchy.<sup>7</sup> In 1932, he entered Vienna University, where he, in his own words, "wasted five semesters in an exacting course of inorganic analysis." His curiosity was aroused, however, by organic chemistry, and especially by a

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<sup>5</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Chemistry 1922-1941*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Co., 1966); Vladimir Prelog and Oskar Jeger, "Leopold Ruzicka: 13 September, 1887 – 26 September 1976," *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* 26 (1980), pp. 411-501.

<sup>6</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Chemistry 1942-1962*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1964). F. Calascibetta, "Chemistry in Czechoslovakia between 1919 and 1939: J. Heyrovský and the Prague Polarographic School," *Centaurus* 39, No. 4 (1997), pp. 368–381; J. A. V. Butler; P. Zuman, "Jaroslav Heyrovský. 1890-1967," *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* 13: 167–191. 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Georgina Ferry, *Max Perutz and the Secrets of Life*, (Cold Springs Harbor, NY: Cold Springs Harbor Laboratory Press, 2008).

course of organic biochemistry, given by F. von Wessely, in which Sir F.G. Hopkins' work at Cambridge was mentioned. It was here that Perutz decided that Cambridge was the place where he wanted to work for his Ph.D. thesis.

With financial help from his father he became a research student at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge under J. D. Bernal in September 1936, and he had stayed at Cambridge ever since. After Hitler's invasion of Austria and Czechoslovakia, the family business was expropriated, his parents became refugees, and his own funds were soon exhausted. He was saved by being appointed research assistant to Sir Lawrence Bragg, under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, on January 1st, 1939. The grant continued, with various interruptions due to the war, until 1945. In October 1947, he was made head of the newly constituted Medical Research Council Unit for Molecular Biology, with J.C. Kendrew representing its entire staff. He continued holding this post until he was made Chairman of the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology, in March 1962. His collaboration with Sir Lawrence Bragg has continued through all these years.

In 1962, Max Perutz was awarded Nobel Prize in chemistry for his contributions to the studies of the structures of globular proteins, which he shared with John Kendrew. In particular, Perutz determined the structure of hemoglobin, using X-ray diffraction analysis of hemoglobin crystals. His research interests centered on molecular biology, and his discoveries led to a greater understanding of the relationship between the structure and function of macromolecules in living systems. Interestingly, the scientific work of Perutz on the structure of hemoglobin started as a result of a conversation with Felix Haurowitz <sup>8</sup> in Prague, in September 1937. At Cambridge he supervised the PhD work of Francis Crick and James Watson in the Cavendish Laboratory as they determined the structure of DNA in 1953.

**Thomas Čech** (1947-), native of Chicago, IL, is of Bohemian ancestry, his grandfather Josef, a shoemaker, having immigrated to the US from Bohemia in 1913. He grew up in Iowa City, Iowa. In 1966, he entered Grinnell College where he obtained a B.A. in 1970. In 1975, Čech completed his Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley and in the same year, he entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he engaged in postdoctoral research. In 1978, he obtained his first faculty position at the University of Colorado where he lectured undergraduate students in chemistry and biochemistry, and where he remains on the faculty, currently as Distinguished Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. In 2000, Dr. Čech succeeded Purnell Choppin as president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Maryland. He also continues to head his world-renowned biochemistry laboratory in the University of Colorado, Boulder. On April 1, 2008, Dr Čech announced that he will step down as the president of HHMI, to return to teaching and research, in spring 2009. In December

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<sup>8</sup> *Felix Haurowitz. 1896-1987. A Biographical Memoir by Frank A. Putnam*, (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 1994).



2006 it was reported that he was among the candidates being considered for the presidency of Harvard University.

His fundamental research led to the discovery of catalytic properties of RNA and the establishment of a link between RNA and the evolutionary chain. His discoveries have shed new light on the mystery of the beginning of life and guided genetic engineers in their search for life-saving cures in the battle against cancer; recipient of Pfizer Award, the Heineken Prize, the Lasker Award and the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1989.<sup>9</sup>

**Walter Kohn** (1923-), is a native of Vienna, Austria, whose father was born in Hodonín, Moravia. He is an American theoretical physicist. He was awarded, with John Pople, the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1998. The award recognized their contributions to the understandings of the electronic properties of materials. In particular, Kohn played the leading role in the development of density functional theory, which made it possible to incorporate quantum mechanical effects in the electronic density (rather than through its many-body wave function. This computational simplification led to many insights and became an essential tool for electronic materials, atomic and molecular structure.

As he stated, “My feelings towards Austria, my native land, are—and will remain—very painful. They are dominated by my vivid recollections of one and half years as a Jewish boy under the Austrian Nazi regime, and by the subsequent murder of my parents, Salomon and Gittel Kohn, of other relatives and several teachers, during the Holocaust. On another level, I want to mention that I have a strong Jewish identity. Both my parents were born in parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, my father in Hodonin, Moravia, my mother in Brody, then in Galicia, Poland, now in the Ukraine. Later they both moved to the capital of Vienna along with their parents. My father carried on a business, Postkartenverlag Brüder Kohn Wien I, whose main product was high quality art postcards, mostly based on paintings by contemporary artists which were commissioned by his firm. The business had flourished in the first two decades of the century but then, in part due to the death of his brother Adolf in World War I, to the dismantlement of the Austrian monarchy and to a worldwide economic depression, it gradually fell on hard times in the 1920s and 1930s. My father struggled from crisis to crisis to keep the business going and to support the family.”

Kohn arrived in England as part of the famous Kindertransport rescue operation. Because he was a German national, he was sent to Canada by the English, as a 17-year-old, immediately after the annexation of Austria by Hitler. He was at first held in detention in a camp near Sherbrooke, Quebec. He eventually succeeded in enrolling in the University of Toronto, receiving a master's degree in 1946. He earned a Ph.D. in physics from Harvard University in 1948 and taught there in 1948–50. He became a professor of physics at the Carnegie-Mellon Institute (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) in 1950, and he held professorships at the University of

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<sup>9</sup> *Nobel Lectures in Chemistry 1981-1990*, Edited by Bo G. Malmstrom, (World Scientific Publishing Co., 1988).

California at San Diego (1960–79) and the University of California at Santa Barbara (1979–91), becoming emeritus in 1991.<sup>10</sup>

**Martin Karplus** (1930–), was born in Vienna, of Moravian grandfather on his father's side. His family fled to the US prior to the German occupation in 1938. He received a Bachelor's degree from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1951 and a Doctorate from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena in 1953. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oxford in England (1953–55) and a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1955–60) and at Columbia University in New York City (1960–65). He joined the chemistry faculty at Harvard in 1966. He also became a professor at the Louis Pasteur University (later incorporated into the University of Strasbourg) in France in 1996.

After studying at Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States, he moved to the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, where he received his Ph.D. in 1953. He worked at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, at Columbia University in New York, and later at Harvard University from 1967. He is also associated with the University of Strasbourg, France.

Karplus has contributed to many fields in physical chemistry, including chemical dynamics, quantum chemistry, and most notably, molecular dynamics simulations of biological macromolecules. He has also been influential in nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, particularly to the understanding of nuclear spin-spin coupling and electron spin resonance spectroscopy. In 2012, Karplus received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, together with Michael Levitt and Arieh Warshel, for "the development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems."<sup>11</sup>

**Michal Levitt** (1947), was born in Pretoria, South Africa, of Jewish family, his father having been a Lithuanian, while his mother (Gertrude, née Lichtenstern) was a daughter of Czech immigrants in Pretoria. His parents separated when he was nine years old and he was brought up entirely by his mother.

Levitt was a PhD student in Computational Biology at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and was based at the Laboratory of Molecular Biology from 1968 to 1972, where he developed a computer program for studying the conformations of molecules that underpinned much of his later work. In 1967, he was sent on behalf of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the University of Cambridge, to Israel, to work at the Weizmann Institute of Science, with Professor Shneior Lifson and a student of his, Arieh Warshel, of the Technion in Haifa. They were using computer modelling to understand the behavior of biological molecules.

He went on to gain a research fellowship at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

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<sup>10</sup> *Nobel Lectures in Chemistry 1996-2000*, Edited by Ingomar Grehe, (World Scientific Publishing Co., 2003).

<sup>11</sup> "Spinach on the Ceiling: A Theoretical Chemist's Return to Biology," *Ann. Rev. Biophys. & Biomolecular Struct.* 35, 1–47 (2006).

From 1980 to 1987, he was Professor of Chemical Physics at Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel. Thereafter, he has served as Professor of Structural biology, at Stanford University, California.

Levitt received the 2013 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, together with Martin Karplus and Arieh Warshel, for “the development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems” in the area “Physiology or Medicine.” Levitt was one of the first researchers to conduct molecular dynamics simulations of DNA and proteins and developed the first software for this purpose. He is currently well known for developing approaches to predict macromolecular structures, having participated in many Critical Assessment of Techniques for Protein Structure Prediction (CASP) competitions. He has also worked on simplified representations of protein structure for analyzing folding and packing and developing scoring systems for large-scale sequence-structure comparisons.<sup>12</sup>

**Karl Landsteiner** (1868-1943), a native of Vienna, Aust., was born of Moravian mother. His mother Franziska (Fannie), nee Hess, was born in Prostějov. His father, Leopold Landsteiner, a doctor of law, was a well-known journalist and newspaper publisher, who died when Karl was six years old. Karl was thus brought up entirely by his mother, Fanny Hess, to whom he was so devoted that a death mask of her hung on his wall until he died. After leaving school, Landsteiner studied medicine at the University of Vienna, graduating in 1891. Even while he was a student he had begun to do biochemical research and in 1891 he published a paper on the influence of diet on the composition of blood ash. To gain further knowledge of chemistry he spent the next five years in the laboratories of Hantzsch at Zurich, Emil Fischer at Wurzburg, and E. Bamberger at Munich.

In 1922 he came to the United States to join the staff of the Rockefeller Institute (now Rockefeller Univ.) and later became a U.S. citizen.

For his discovery of human blood groups he won the 1930 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. As a result of his research in immunology and the chemistry of antigens and serological reactions, he made valuable contributions in hemolysis and in methods of studying poliomyelitis. In 1940 he identified, in collaboration with A. S. Wiener, the Rh factor.<sup>13</sup>

**Carl Ferdinand Cori** (1896-1984) was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The Coris originated in Italy and immigrated to Bohemia for political reasons. Carl Cori's paternal grandfather was a senior civil servant whose maternal grandfather was the Czech patriot, historian František Martin Pelcl (1734-1801).<sup>14</sup> Carl's father,

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<sup>12</sup> *The Nobel Prizes 2013*. (Published on behalf of The Nobel Foundation by Science History Publications/USA, division Watson Publishing International LLC, Sagamore Beach, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Physiology or Medicine 1922-1941*, (Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1965); Michael Heidelberger, *Karl Landsteiner: June 14, 1868-June 26, 1943. Biographical Memoir*, (National Academy of Sciences. Columbia University Press, 1969); *Epitope Recognition since Landsteiner's Discovery*. Edited by M. Eibl, W. R. Mayr and G. J. Thorbecke. (Springer, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Josef Johanides, “František Martin Pelcl a jeho proslavení potomci,; in: *Evropa mezi*

Dr. Carl I. Cori, a native of Brno, was Director of the Marine Biological Station in Trieste, and it was here that young Carl spent his childhood. He received an early introduction to science from his father and this was stimulated on summer visits to the Tyrol, to the home of his grandfather, Ferdinand Lippich, Professor of Theoretical Physics at Prague. He studied at the gymnasium in Trieste and graduated in 1914 when he entered the German University of Prague to study medicine. During World War I, he served as a lieutenant in the Sanitary Corps of the Austrian Army on the Italian front; he returned to University, where he studied with his future wife, Gerty Theresa Radnitz. In 1920 both Carl Cori and Gerty Radnitz received their medical degrees. The couple married in August of that year in Vienna, where both had gone to complete postdoctoral work. The year 1920 also marked the publication of their first joint scientific paper. Their scientific collaboration would continue until Gerty Cori's death in 1957.

In 1922, he accepted a position as biochemist at the State Institute for the Study of Malignant Diseases in Buffalo, New York. In 1931, he was appointed Professor of Pharmacology at the Washington University Medical School in St. Louis, where he later became Professor of Biochemistry.

The Coris most notable contribution to science was their series of discoveries that elucidated the pathway of glycogen breakdown in animal cells and the enzymic basis of its regulation. Those discoveries formed a linear sequence that fell into four parts: the Cori Cycle – “cycle of carbohydrates” (1922-31); the Cori ester – glucose 1-phosphate (1931-37); phosphorylase and the cellular pathway of glycogenolysis (1937-44); and the regulation of phosphorylase (1945-52). In a biographical memoir published in 1986, Sir Philip Randle noted that Carl and Gerty Cori's research “was characterized above all else by intellectual rigor applied with equal force to experimental methods and techniques (physiological and chemical); to a profound knowledge and critical appreciation of the literature; to a generally dispassionate, though sometimes defensive, analysis of discrepancies; to a high degree of replication especially in animal experiments; and to a meticulous attention to detail especially in formulating hypotheses.” For this work, he was a recipient, with his wife G.T. Cori, of Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology in 1947.<sup>15</sup>

**Gerty Theresa Radnitz Cori** (1896-1957) was also a native of Prague, Czechoslovakia. She was the oldest of three daughters of Martha and Otto Radnitz, manager of a sugar refinery. The family was Jewish and she was educated by private tutors before entering a Lyceum for girls in 1906; she graduated in 1912 and studied for the University entrance examination, which she took and passed at the Děčín Realgymnasium in 1914. She entered the Medical School of the German University

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*Německem a Ruskem. Sborník prací k sedmdesátinám Jaroslava Valenty*, (Praha: Historický ústav AV ČR, 2000), pp. 107-112.

<sup>15</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Physiology or Medicine 1942-1962*. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1964); M. Cohn, “Carl Ferdinand Cori: December 5, 1896-October 19, 1984,” *Biographical Memoirs. National Academy of Sciences* 61 (1992), 79-109; P. Randle, “Carl Ferdinand Cori: 5 December 1896-20 October 1984,” *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society. Royal Society* (Great Britain) 32 (1986), pp. 65-95.

of Prague and received the Doctorate in Medicine in 1920. She then spent two years at the Carolinen Children's Hospital before immigrating to America with her husband, Carl, whom she married in 1920. They worked together in Buffalo and when he moved to St. Louis, she joined him as Research Associate. Gerty Cori was made Professor of Biochemistry in 1947.

The Coris have collaborated in most of their research work, commencing in their student days and stemming from their mutual interest in the preclinical sciences. Their first joint paper resulted from an immunological study of the complement of human serum.

In America, they first studied the fate of sugar in the animal body and the effects of insulin and epinephrine. The presence of glycolysis of tumors *in vivo* was demonstrated. Their work on carbohydrate metabolism passed from studies of whole animal to isolated tissues and, later, tissue extracts and isolated enzymes, some in crystalline form, were studied. In 1936, they isolated glucose-1-phosphate, "Cori ester," and traced its presence to the activity of the phosphorylase, which catalyzes the breakdown and synthesis of polysaccharides: this discovery made possible the enzymatic synthesis of glycogen and starch *in vitro*. Subsequently, phosphorylase and other enzymes were crystallized. This was the basis for her receiving, jointly with her husband, Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1947.<sup>16</sup>

**Konrad Zacharias Lorenz** (1903-1989), a native of Vienna, was of Czech ancestry. His father was born in Vodňany, Bohemia. Lorenz credits his career to his parents, who "were supremely tolerant of my inordinate love for animals," and to his childhood encounter with Selma Lagerlof's *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, which filled him with a great enthusiasm about wild geese.

At the request of his father, Adolf, Lorenz began a premedical curriculum in 1922 at Columbia University, but he returned to Vienna in 1923 to continue his studies at the University of Vienna. He graduated as Doctor of Medicine (MD) in 1928 and became an assistant professor at the Institute of Anatomy until 1935. He finished his zoological studies in 1933 and received his second doctorate (PhD). In 1936, at an international scientific symposium on instinct, Lorenz met his great friend and colleague Nikolaas Tinbergen. Together they studied geese—wild, domestic, and hybrid. One result of these studies was that Lorenz "realized that an overpowering increase in the drives of feeding as well as of copulation and a waning of more differentiated social instincts is characteristic of very many domestic animals." Lorenz began to suspect and fear "that analogous processes of deterioration may be at work with civilized humanity."

In 1940 he became a professor of psychology at the University of Königsberg. He was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1941. He sought to be a motorcycle mechanic, but instead he was assigned as a medic. He was captured by the Russians

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<sup>16</sup> Joseph Larner, *Gerty Theresa Cori (1896-1957) .A Biographical Memoir*, (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 1992); Sharon Bertsch McGrayne, *Nobel Prize Women in Science*, (Carol Publishing Group, 1993), pp. 93-116.

very near the start of his service and became a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union from 1942 to 1948. In captivity he continued to work as a medic and “got quite friendly with some Russians, mostly doctors.” When he was repatriated, he was allowed to keep the manuscript of a book he had been writing, and his pet starling. He arrived back in Altenberg “with manuscript and bird intact.” The manuscript became his book *Behind the Mirror*. The Max Planck Society established the Lorenz Institute for Behavioral Physiology in Buldern, Germany, in 1950.

In 1958, Lorenz transferred to the Max Planck Institute for Behavioral Physiology in Seewiesen.

He shared the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine “for discoveries in individual and social behavior patterns” with two other important early ethologists, Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch. In 1969, he became the first recipient of the Prix mondial Cino Del Duca.<sup>17</sup>

**Karl von Frisch** (1886-1982), b. Vienna, was of Bohemian ancestry. His mother, Marie, née Exner, was a native of Prague and his paternal grandfather Anton was born in Mladá Boleslav. He was the youngest of four sons, all of whom became university professors. He studied in Vienna under Hans Leo Przibram (1874-1944) and in Munich under Richard von Hertwig, initially in the field of medicine but later turning to the natural sciences. He received his doctorate in 1910 and in the same year started work as an assistant in the zoology department of Munich University. In 1912 he became a lecturer in zoology and comparative anatomy there; and in 1919 was promoted to a professorship. In 1921 he went to Rostock University as a professor of zoology and director of an institute. In 1923 he accepted the offer of a chair at Breslau University, returning in 1925 to Munich University, where he became the head of the institute of zoology. After that institute was destroyed in World War II, he went to the University of Graz in 1946, remaining there until 1950 when he returned to the Munich institute after it was reopened.

He was a zoologist and a pioneer of behavioral physiology. He is best known for his studies of bees, he found that bees communicate the distance and direction of a food supply to other members of the colony by two types of rhythmic movement, or dance. Circling indicates that food is within about 250 ft (75 m) of the hive; wagging indicates a greater distance. In 1949 he established that bees, through their perception of polarized light, use the sun as a compass even when it is not visible. He also established that fish can hear and distinguish colors. He shared a 1973 Nobel Prize with Konrad Lorenz and Nikolaas Tinbergen.<sup>18</sup>

**Daniel Carleton Gajdušek** (1923-2008), a native of Yonkers, NY, was of Slovak descent. His father, Karol Gajdušek, was a Slovak farm boy from a small village Smrdáky, near Senica, who had left home as an adolescent youth to emigrate

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<sup>17</sup> Nobel *Lectures in Physiology or Medicine 1971-1980*. Edited by Jan Lindsten. (World Scientific Publishing Co., 1992).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

to America before World War I, alone and without speaking English, to become a butcher in the immigrant communities of Yonkers, where he met and married Ottilia Dobroczi. Her parents had also come, each alone, as youthful immigrants from Debrecen, Hungary to America.

They lived in Yonkers, New York, where their son was born. Gajdušek graduated in 1943 from the University of Rochester, where he studied physics, biology, chemistry and mathematics. He obtained an M.D. from Harvard University in 1946. He performed postdoctoral research at Columbia, Caltech and Harvard before being drafted to complete military service at the Walter Reed Army Medical Service Graduate School as a research virologist. He held a position at the Institut Pasteur in Tehran from 1952 to 1953, where he was excited by the challenges “offered by urgent opportunistic investigations of epidemiological problems in exotic and isolated populations.” In 1954 he went to work as a visiting investigator at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne, Australia. There, he began the work that culminated in the Nobel Prize.

He received the award in recognition of his study of the disease kuru. This disease was rampant among the South Fore people of New Guinea in the 1950s and 1960s. Gajdušek connected the prevalence of the disease with the practice of funerary cannibalism, practiced by the South Fore. With elimination of this practice, Kuru disappeared among the South Fore within a generation. Gajdušek concluded that the disease was transmitted in the ritualistic eating of the brains of deceased relatives, which was practiced by the Fore. He then proved this hypothesis by successfully transmitting the disease to primates and demonstrating that it had an unusually long incubation period of several years. This was the first demonstration of infectious nature of a non-inflammatory degenerative disease in humans. Kuru was shown to have remarkable similarity with scrapie, a disease of sheep and goats caused by an unconventional infectious agent. Later more human agents belonging to the same group were discovered.<sup>19</sup>

### *Physics*

**Philipp Eduard Anton Lenard** (1862-1947), was born in Bratislava, Slovakia. His family originally came from the Tyrol. He studied physics successively at Budapest, Vienna, Berlin and Heidelberg and in 1886 took his Ph.D. at Heidelberg. From 1892 he worked as a Privatdozent and assistant to Professor Hertz at the University of Bonn and in 1894 was appointed Professor Extraordinary at the University of Breslau. In 1895 he became Professor of Physics at Aix-la-Chapelle and in 1896 Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of Heidelberg. In 1898 he was appointed Professor Ordinarius at the University of Kiel. After serving as professor at the Universities of Kiel (1898-1907) and

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<sup>19</sup> Nobel *Lectures in Physiology or Medicine 1971-1980*. Edited by Jan Lindsten. (World Scientific Publishing Co., 1992); Thomas H. Maugh, II, “D. Carleton Gajdusek Dies at 85...,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 2008.

Heidelberg (1896-98, 1907-31), he headed the Philipp Lenard Institute at Heidelberg.

He was the first to cause cathode rays to pass from the interior of a vacuum tube through a thin metal window into the air, where they produce luminosity. For his research in this field he received the 1905 Nobel Prize in Physics. He is noted also for his work on the structure of the atom and for the discovery (1902), in connection with the photoelectric effect, that the velocity of electrons is independent of the intensity of the light that emits them.<sup>20</sup>

**Wolfgang Ernst Pauli** (1900-1958), b. Vienna, was of Czech ancestry. His middle name was given in honor of his godfather, the physicist Ernst Mach. Pauli's father's parents (originally named Pascheles) came from a prominent Jewish family in Prague.

Only two months after graduation from a gymnasium, the young prodigy published his first paper, on Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity. He attended the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, working under Arnold Sommerfeld, where he received his PhD in 1921 for his thesis on the quantum theory of ionized molecular hydrogen. Pauli spent a year at the University of Göttingen as the assistant to Max Born, and the following year at the Institute for Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen, which later became the Niels Bohr Institute in 1965. From 1923 to 1928, he was a lecturer at the University of Hamburg.

During this period, Pauli was instrumental in the development of the modern theory of quantum mechanics. In particular, he formulated the exclusion principle and the theory of nonrelativistic spin. He was the first to recognize the existence of the neutrino, an uncharged and massless particle that carries off energy in radioactive disintegration. Pauli was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1945.<sup>21</sup>

**Felix Bloch** (1905-1983), was a native of Zurich, Switzerland, whose Jewish parents Gustav and Agnes were born in Bohemia. He was educated there and at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich. Initially studying engineering, he soon changed to physics. During this time he attended lectures and seminars given by Peter Debye and Hermann Weyl at ETH Zürich and Erwin Schrödinger at the neighboring University of Zürich. A fellow student in these seminars was John von Neumann. Graduating in 1927 he continued his physics studies at the University of Leipzig with Werner Heisenberg, gaining his doctorate in 1928. His doctoral thesis established the quantum theory of solids, using Bloch waves to describe the electrons

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<sup>20</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Physics 1901-1921*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1967).

<sup>21</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Physics 1942-1962*. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1964); K. V. Laurikainen, *Beyond the Atom - The Philosophical Thought of Wolfgang Pauli*. (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1988); Charles P. Enz, *No Time to be Brief, A Scientific Biography of Wolfgang Pauli*, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002).



He remained in European academia, studying with Wolfgang Pauli in Zürich, Niels Bohr in Copenhagen and Enrico Fermi in Rome before he went back to Leipzig assuming a position as Privatdozent.

In 1933, immediately after Hitler came to power, he left Germany, emigrating to work at Stanford University in 1934, where he became the first professor for theoretical physics. In 1939, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. During WW II he worked on nuclear power at Los Alamos National Laboratory, before resigning to join the radar project at Harvard University.

After the war he concentrated on investigations into nuclear induction and nuclear magnetic resonance, which are the underlying principles of MRI. In 1946 he proposed the Bloch equations which determine the time evolution of nuclear magnetization. He and Edward Mills Purcell were awarded the 1952 Nobel Prize for “their development of new ways and methods for nuclear magnetic precision measurements.” In 1954–1955, he served for one year as the first Director-General of CERN. In 1961, he was made Max Stein Professor of Physics at Stanford University.<sup>22</sup>

**Dougals Dean Osheroff** (1945-), was born in Aberdeen, WA, of Russian Jewish father, while his mother was of Slovak descent. His mothers’ father was a Lutheran minister.

Osheroff earned his Bachelor’s degree in 1967 from Caltech, where he attended lectures by Richard Feynman and did undergraduate research for Gerry Neugebauer. He joined the Laboratory of Atomic and Solid-State Physics at Cornell University as a graduate student, doing research in low-temperature physics. Together with David Lee, the head of the laboratory, and Robert C. Richardson, Osheroff used a Pomeranchuk cell to investigate the behavior of  $^3\text{He}$  at temperatures within a few thousandths of a degree of absolute zero. They discovered unexpected effects in their measurements, which they eventually explained as phase transitions to a superfluid phase of  $^3\text{He}$ . Lee, Richardson and Osheroff were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1996 for this discovery.

He received a Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1973. He then worked at Bell Labs in Murray Hill, New Jersey for 15 years, continuing to research low-temperature phenomena in  $^3\text{He}$ . In 1987 he moved to the Departments of Physics and Applied Physics at Stanford University, where he also served as department chair from 1993-96. His research is focused on phenomena that occur at extremely low temperatures.

**David J. Gross** (1941-), b. Washington, DC, was of Czechoslovak ancestry. Gross received his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, in 1962. He received his Ph.D. in physics from the University of California, Berkeley in 1966, under the supervision of Geoffrey

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<sup>22</sup> *Nobel Lectures, Physics 1942-1962*, M. A. Shampo and R. A. Kyle, “Felix Bloch—developer of magnetic resonance imaging,” *Mayo Clin. Proc.* 70, No. 9 (September 1995), p 889.

Chew. He was a Junior Fellow at Harvard University and a Professor at Princeton University until 1997. He was the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1987, the Dirac Medal in 1988, and currently is the director and holder of the Frederick W. Gluck Chair in Theoretical Physics at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

He is a particle physicist and string theorist. In 1973, Gross, working with his first graduate student, Frank Wilczek, at Princeton University, discovered asymptotic freedom, which holds that the closer quarks are to each other, the less the strong interaction (or color charge) between them; when quarks are in extreme proximity, the nuclear force between them is so weak that they behave almost as free particles. For this work, along with Frank Wilczek and David Politzer, he was awarded the 2004 Nobel Prize in Physics. Asymptotic freedom, was important for the development of quantum chromodynamics.<sup>23</sup>

**Hugh David Politzer** (1949-), b. New York, NY, was of Slovak ancestry. His ancestors, however came from Moravia. He shared the 2004 Nobel Prize in Physics with David Gross and Frank Wilczek for their discovery of asymptotic freedom in quantum chromodynamics.

He graduated from the Bronx High School of Science in 1966, received his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in 1969, and his Ph.D. in 1974 from Harvard University, where his graduate advisor was Sidney Coleman.

Politzer was a junior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows from 1974 to 1977 before moving to the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where he is currently professor of theoretical physics. In 1989 he appeared in a minor role as Manhattan Project physicist Robert Serber in the movie *Fat Man and Little Boy*, which starred Paul Newman as General Leslie Groves.<sup>24</sup>

In his first published article, which appeared in 1973, Politzer described the phenomenon of asymptotic freedom: the closer quarks are to each other, the weaker the strong interaction, given by the color charge, will be between them. When quarks are in extreme proximity, the nuclear force between them is so weak that they behave almost like free particles. This result—independently discovered at around the same time by Gross and Wilczek at Princeton University -- was extremely important in the development of quantum chromodynamics, the theory of the strong nuclear interactions.

With Thomas Appelquist, Politzer also played a central role in predicting the existence of “charmonium,” an elementary particle made by a charm quark and its anti-particle. Experimentalists called this the “J/Ψ particle.”

**Peter Grünberg** (\*1939), b. Plzeň, Bohemia, was of Jewish descent. His father was a Russian immigrant, who held a diploma in mechanical engineering from the Technical University of Brno and worked for the Škoda factory, designing locomotives. His mother was a native of Dolní Sekyřany.

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<sup>23</sup> *The Nobel Prizes 2004*. Edited by Tore Frängsmyr, (Stockholm: Noble Foundation, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> *The Nobel Prizes 2004*. Edited by Tore Frängsmyr, (Stockholm: Nobel Foundation, 2005).

Grünberg received his intermediate diploma in 1962 from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. He then attended the Darmstadt University of Technology, where he received his diploma in physics in 1966 and his Ph.D. in 1969. From 1969-1972, he did postdoctoral work at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. He later joined the Institute for Solid State Physics at the Jülich Research Centre, where he became a leading researcher in the field of thin film and multilayer magnetism until his retirement in 2004.

In 1986 he discovered the antiparallel exchange coupling between ferromagnetic layers separated by a thin non-ferromagnetic layer, and in 1988 he discovered the Giant magnetoresistive effect (GMR). GMR was simultaneously and independently discovered by Albert Fert from the Université de Paris Sud. It has been used extensively in read heads of modern hard drives. Another application of the GMR effect is non-volatile, magnetic random access memory.<sup>25</sup>

### *Literature*

**Jaroslav Seifert** (1901-1986), b. Prague, Czech., was the first Czech to win the Nobel Prize in literature. Seifert made a living as a journalist until 1950, but his first book of poetry, *Mesto v slzách* ("Town in Tears"), was published in 1920.

His early proletarian poetry reflects his youthful expectations for the future of communism in the Soviet Union. As he matured, however, Seifert became less enchanted with that system of government, and his poetic themes began to evolve. In 1929 Seifert broke with the Communist Party. The history and other aspects of Czechoslovakia were the most common subjects of his poetry. In addition to writing about 30 volumes of poetry, Seifert contributed to several journals and wrote children's literature.

In 1966 he was named Poet of the Nation, and he was one of several writers, later silenced, who condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In January 1977 he was among the first to sign a petition, Charter 77, drawn up to protest the rule of Czech leader Gustav Husák. His memoirs were published in 1981.<sup>26</sup>

**Elfriede Jelinek** (1946-), b. Müzzzuschlag, Austria, was of Czech Jewish ancestry on her father's side. She is a controversial Austrian novelist and dramatist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2004.

In the early 1960s she studied music composition and theater science, and by the early '70s was also active in leftist politics. She began writing radio plays, and her 1974 play "When the Sun Sinks It's Time to Close Shop" made her famous in Austria and Germany. Jelinek's work has often caused controversy, especially in Austria, where she has been criticized for pointing to Austria's role in World War

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<sup>25</sup> *The Nobel Prizes 2007*. Edited by Karl Grandin. (Stockholm: Nobel Foundation, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> *Nobel Lectures in Literature 1981-1990*. Edited by Sture Allen. (World Scientific Publishing Co., 1994); Vaclav Cerny, *Jaroslav Seifert*. (Kolin nad Rynem: Index, 1984); Zdenek Pesat, *Jaroslav Seifert*, (Praha: Cesky spisovatel, 1991).

II fascism. Jelinek's reputation as an overtly political writer has kept critics from denouncing her work as simply prurient.

Her work is little known outside of Germany and Austria, but she is considered an influential writer and in 2004 she won the Nobel Prize for literature, only the tenth woman to do so. Her most famous books are *Wonderful, Wonderful Times* (1980) and *The Piano Teacher* (1983). The latter was made into a feature film starring Isabelle Huppert and was released in 2001. Famously reclusive (she describes herself as having a "social phobia"), Jelinek released her 2007 novel online, under the title *Neid* (Envy).<sup>27</sup>

### *Economics*

**Friedrich August von Hayek** (1899-1992), b. Vienna, was of Czech ancestry on his father's side, as his name indicates. Hayek actually traced his ancestry to a "Hagek" from Prague, who was an associate of the famous astronomer Tycho Brahe. This must have been Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek (1525-1600), Bohemian astronomer and personal physician of Emperor Rudolph II. Hayek's father August became a medical doctor, employed by the municipal ministry of health, but his true passion was botany, in which he wrote a number of monographs. Hayek's mother, Felocitas, née v. Juraschek, which is also Czech, was born in 1875. Her mother was from a wealthy conservative, land-owning family. Both of Hayek's grandfathers were scholars. Franz v. Juraschek was a leading economist in Austria; He was a statistician who later became employed by the Austrian national government. Hayek's parental grandfather, Gustav Edler v. Hayek, taught natural science at the Imperial Realobergymnasium in Vienna for thirty years and was author a number of systematic works in biology.<sup>28</sup>

Hayek was raised and educated in Austria and taught at the London School of Economics in the 1930s, where he gained attention for his criticism of Keynes. He expressed his commitment to free markets and his aversion to government intervention in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944). The economic policies of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher were significantly influenced by his ideas. Hayek branched out into the fields of philosophy, psychology, and epistemology. He was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1974.<sup>29</sup>

**Herbert Alexander Simon** (1916-2001), b. Milwaukee, WI, was of Czech ancestry on his mother's side. Herbert's mother, Edna Marguerite Merkel, was an accomplished pianist whose ancestors had come from Prague.

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<sup>27</sup> *Nobel Lectures in Literature 1981-1990; Elfriede Jelinek. Writing Woman, Nation, and Identity.* Edited by Matthias Piccolruaz Konzett and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger. (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> *Prize Lectures in Economic Sciences 1969-1980.* Edited by Assar Lindbeck, (World Scientific Publishing Co., 1982); Alan O. Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek: A Biography*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> *Prize Lectures in Economic Sciences 1969-1980, Friedrich Hayek: A Biography.*

He received an A.B. from the University of Chicago in 1936 and a Ph.D. in 1943. He stayed on at Chicago for two years as a research assistant before becoming a staff member of the International City Managers Association and assistant editor of the *Public Management and Municipal Year Book* (1938-1939). The following year he joined the University of California as director of administrative measurement studies.

After a teaching post at the Illinois Institute of Technology (1942-1949), Simon joined the teaching staff of the Carnegie-Mellon University, first as professor of administration and psychology (1949-1955) and later as professor of computer science and psychology (1956 to the mid-1980s).

Simon was researcher in the fields of cognitive psychology, computer science, public administration, economic sociology, and philosophy (sometimes described as a “polymath”). In 1978, he received the Nobel Prize in Economics for his pioneering research into the decision-making process within economic organizations.

His later work involved artificial intelligence, developing computer simulations of problem-solving. Simon was able to develop more complex models of economic decision-making by bringing psychological concepts into play, thus leading to models that more closely resembled human social behavior. Simon understood that although human intellect plays a key role in economic decision-making, emotions, unconscious drives, environmental distractions, and so forth, are also involved in the process. He brought many psychological variables into economic thought, leading to much more complex economic models, which were closer and more accurate representations of the full dimensions of human decision-making.<sup>30</sup>

## Controversies

It is not surprising that some Nobel Prize awards led to controversies and contentious disputes,<sup>31</sup> some of them also involving individuals of Czech or Slovak ancestry. Some of them are enumerated below.

### Jan Janský vs. Karl Landsteiner

Jan Janský was born on April 3, 1873 in Prague. He was a Czech serologist, neurologist and psychiatrist. Czechs generally credit him with the discovery of the first classification of blood into the four types (A, B, AB, O) of the ABO blood group system.

Janský studied medicine at Charles University in Prague. From 1899 he worked in a psychiatric clinic in Prague. In 1914 he was named professor. During World

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<sup>30</sup> *Prize Lectures in Economic Sciences 1969-1980*. Edited by Assar Lindbeck.(World Scientific Publishing Co., 1982).

<sup>31</sup> Horace Freeland Judson, “No Nobel Prize for Whining,” *New York Times*, October 20, 2003.

War I Jánský served two years as a doctor at the front until a heart attack disabled him. After the war he worked as a neuropsychiatrist in a military Hospital.

Through his psychiatric research, Jánský tried to find a correlation between mental diseases and blood diseases. He found no such correlation existed and in 1907 published a study, "Hematologická studie u psychotiků" (Hematological study of psychotics), in which he classified blood into four groups I, II, III, IV. At the time this discovery passed almost unnoticed. In 1921 an American medical commission acknowledged Jánský's classification (over that of Karl Landsteiner, who classified blood into only three groups; and was for this (blood types) discovery awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1930). Jánský's classification remains in use today. Jánský was also a proponent of voluntary blood donations. He died on September 8, 1921.<sup>32</sup>

### **Lise Meitner vs. Otto Hahn**

Lise Meitner (1878-1968), b. Vienna, of Czech ancestry. Her maternal grandparents were Moravian Jews and her father's ancestors, also Jewish, resided in the Moravian village of Majetín (Majetein), from which their surname originated.

She was a physicist who first identified nuclear fission. Despite her great contribution to the sciences, she was not offered Nobel Prize. In 1992, several years after her death, physicists named their 109th element 'meitnerium' in honor of Lise Meitner, finally giving her the official recognition she deserved.

Since the Viennese system of education did not allow girls to enter high school from 1892 to 1901, she had to struggle a lot to get her education. The Viennese government opened high schools for girls in 1899. Her father hired a tutor to prepare her for university entrance when she was 21 years old. In these two years she completed 8 years' worth of school syllabus. In 1901 the Viennese government opened universities to women and Meitner enrolled there. Around 1905 she started studying radioactivity and in 1906 she received her doctorate. She went to Germany to pursue further studies in physics under the guidance of Max Planck. She stayed in Germany for the next 31 years, contributing a lot to German science.

During this time she met Otto Hahn, a German chemist who was working on radioactivity for Prof. Emil Fischer's chemistry institute. Meitner collaborated with him to work on radioactivity. However, since Fischer did not allow women to enter the institute she had to perform her experiments in the basement of the institute. Two years later she was allowed to use the institute. In 1912 she and Hahn moved to a new Kaiser Wilhelm Chemistry Institute. During the same time Max Planck gave her an assistantship, which was very prestigious but earned her very only a small stipend. When in 1911 she got an offer from Prague University, Kaiser Wilhelm decided finally to pay her salary.

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<sup>32</sup> "Jan Jánský (3.4.1873-8.9.1921): Objevitel krevních skupin," *Životopisy online – Osobnosti a celebrit*. <<http://zivotopisyonline.cz/jan-jansky-341873-891921-objevitel-krevnich-skupin/>>

In 1926 she became the first woman physics professor in Germany. During the 1920's and 1930's she was nominated for Nobel Prize several times. During this time she also ruled the institute with a firm hand. By 1937 Meitner and Hahn identified at least 9 different radioactive elements and published several papers. During this time Fritz Strassman joined them as analytical chemist. During this time in many parts of the world people were working on nuclear fission, and Meitner too was puzzled by its mystery.

When Hitler took over Austria in 1938, she became a German Jewish citizen. This started the dark period of her life. At the age of 59 years she fled from Germany to Denmark and then to Sweden. Going to Sweden was a mistake, as in Sweden she was an exile. During her stay in Sweden she continued to correspond with Hahn. The product of it was "nuclear fission." She and Frisch worked very hard to solve this mystery. When Niels Bohr learned about this, Bohr was so excited that he shared this secret with another scientist and the news was all over US. Bohr tried to help Meitner and Frisch to get the credit but their report was published later than Hahn's report. Though it was Meitner who actually solved the mystery and Hahn just carried out the experiment to prove it, Hahn got all the credit.

In 1966 United States Atomic Energy awarded the Enrico Fermi award to the entire team of Meitner, Hahn and Strassman. Meitner was the first woman to get this award.

On 27th Oct. 1968 she passed away peacefully. Denied the Nobel Prize and due recognition during her lifetime, Lise Meitner is now considered one of the most significant woman scientists of the century.<sup>33</sup>

### **Milan Hašek vs. P. B. Medawar**

The year 2003 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of a paper by Milan Hašek (1825-1984), in which he showed the phenomenon of immunological tolerance by the selective failure of chimaeric chick-embryo parabionts to produce antibodies against the red blood cells of each other. The discovery of tolerance was credited by the Nobel Prize, but excluded Hašek, because he misinterpreted his original experimental results.<sup>34</sup>

### **Other Individuals of Czech or Slovak Ancestry Considered For Nobel Prize**

**Chemistry:** Paul Zamecnik of the US (who was of Czech ancestry)

**Medicine or Physiology:** Joseph Goldberger of the US (who was of Slovak ancestry)

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<sup>33</sup> Lise Meitner Dies. Atomic Pioneer, 89," *New York Times*, October 28, 1968; Patricia Rife, *Lise Meitner and the Dawn of the Nuclear Age*, (Boston: Brickhauser, 1998).

<sup>34</sup> Juraj Ivanyi, "Milan Hašek and the Discovery of Immunological Tolerance," *Nature Reviews Immunology* 3 (July 2003): 591-597.

**Literature:** Jaroslav Vrchlický, Karel Čapek, Milan Kundera, all Czech natives.

Karel Čapek almost received the Nobel Prize for literature but in the end did not, because Sweden viewed it as unfavorable to award it to an anti-fascist at the advent of World War II out of fear of Hitler's reaction.

**Peace:** T.G. Masaryk, Eduard Beneš, Václav Havel, all Czech born.

## Foreign Nobel Prize Winners Associated with the Czech Lands

### Marie Curie (1867-1934)

Marie Skłodowska Curie was a physicist and chemist of Polish upbringing and subsequent French citizenship. She was a pioneer in the field of radioactivity and the first person honored with two Nobel Prizes - in physics and chemistry. She was also the first woman professor at the University of Paris.

She was born Maria Skłodowska in Warsaw and lived there until she was twenty-four. In 1891 she followed her older sister Bronisława to study in Paris, where she obtained her higher degrees and conducted her subsequent scientific work. She founded the Curie Institutes in Paris and Warsaw. Her husband Pierre Curie shared her Nobel Prize in physics. Her daughter Irène Joliot-Curie and son-in-law, Frédéric Joliot-Curie, also shared a Nobel Prize.

Searching for possible sources of radioactivity, she discovered that the pitchblende was more active than any other material she tested. The pitchblende, in which polonium and radium were hidden, was a costly ore, treated at Jáchymov mines in Bohemia for the extraction of uranium slats used in the manufacture of glass. Tons of pitchblende which would be needed to obtain enough radioactive material, would cost a great deal of money which Curies could not afford. They reasoned, however, that polonium and radium would probably remain in the residue, after the uranium slats were removed, which had little value. They were right. Consequently they ordered tons of the pitchblende residues from the Austrian government which enabled them to conduct their ingenious work.

Her achievements include the creation of a theory of radioactivity (a term she coined), techniques for isolating radioactive isotopes, and the discovery of two new elements, polonium and radium. Under her direction, the world's first studies were conducted into the treatment of neoplasms using radioactive isotopes.<sup>35</sup>

### Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

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<sup>35</sup> From *Nobel Lectures, Physics 1901-1921*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1967); Marilyn Bailey Ogilvie, *Marie Curie. A Biography*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004).



Einstein's years in Prague (1911-12) were an important milestone in the life of this important researcher and philosopher. In Prague Albert Einstein found—according to his own writings—the necessary composure to give the basic thought of the general theory of relativity (1908) a more definite shape.

The 17-month lasting stay in Prague was extraordinarily successful. Here Einstein wrote 11 scientific works, 5 of them on radiation mathematics and on quantum theory of the solids. In March 1916, in the Leipzig *Annalen der Physik*, the work “The Foundation of the General Theory of Relativity” was published and in December of the same year Einstein published his famous book *On the Special and General Theory of Relativity*. This book was later translated also into the Czech language. Albert Einstein wrote a special preface to this edition.

Using his own words: “I am pleased that this little book in which the main thoughts of the theory of relativity are portrayed is now published in the national language of the country in which I found the necessary composure to give the basic thought of the general theory of relativity (1908) step by step a more definite shape so it could be realized. In the quiet rooms of the Theoretical Physical Institute of the Prague German University in the Viničná ulice I discovered in 1911 that the equivalence principle demands a refraction of the rays of light at the sun of a sum that can be observed without knowing that more than a hundred years before a similar conclusion out of the Newton mechanic in connection with Newton's emission theory of the light was drawn. Also the still not really confirmed consequence of the red shift of the spectral lines I discovered in Prague.”<sup>36</sup>

Later, the very famous Czech Professor Václav Hlavatý who left for the United States, worked with Einstein and formulated many new results of Einstein's theory.<sup>37</sup>

### Vladimir Prelog (1906-1998)

Vladimir Prelog was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the beginning of the first World War, in 1915, the family moved to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, where he attended the gymnasium. The period 1924 to 1929 was spent studying Chemistry at the Czech Institute of Technology in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The supervisor of his thesis was Professor Emil Votoček, one of the prominent founders of chemical research in Czechoslovakia. His mentor, however, was Rudolf Lukeš, then lecturer and later successor of Votoček to the chair of organic chemistry. To Lukeš he owed the greatest part of his early scientific education, and he remained his close friend until his premature death in 1960.

He obtained his Dr. Ing. Diploma in 1929 and subsequently worked for five years in the newly created laboratory of G. J. Dříza in Prague where rare chemicals were produced on small scale. In 1933 he married a Czech girl, Kamila Vítková. During the war he left for Switzerland and worked in Leopold Růžička's laboratory

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<sup>36</sup> From *Nobel Lectures, Physics 1901-1921*.

<sup>37</sup> B. Hoffman (ed.), *Perspectives in Geometry and Relativity: Essays in Honor of Václav Hlavatý*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966).

of organic chemistry at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. He rose through ranks to full professor in 1950 and in 1957 became the successor to Prof. Růžička.

Prelog received the 1975 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his works in the field of natural compounds and stereochemistry, sharing it with the Australian/British research chemist John Cornforth. His scientific works encompass more than 400 works. Lecturer of distinctive style and eloquence, he trained many generations of chemists.

He was an honorary member of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society and recipient of the Hanuš and Votoček medals and honorary doctorate from the Chemical Institute of Technology.<sup>38</sup>

### **Thomas Mann (1875-1855)**

Thomas Mann was a German novelist, short story writer, social critic, philanthropist, essayist, and 1929 Nobel Prize laureate, known for his series of highly symbolic and ironic epic novels and novellas, noted for their insight into the psychology of the artist and the intellectual. His analysis and critique of the European and German soul used modernized German and Biblical stories, as well as the ideas of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, and the Nazis revoked Thomas Mann's citizenship, he had to leave the country and move to Switzerland. In 1936, the Czechoslovak Government offered him Czechoslovak citizenship and a passport which he accepted. Thomas Mann remained a Czech citizen for the next eight years. While continuing living in Switzerland, he traveled through Europe and to America on the Czechoslovak passport. He also visited Czechoslovakia frequently and also wrote to Czech journals and émigré papers in that country. He was the guest of the Czech PEN and was received by President of the Republic.

When World War II broke out in 1939, he immigrated to the United States and in 1944 became US citizen.<sup>39</sup>

### **Barack Obama (1961-)**

Barack Obama is the 44th and current President of the United States. He is the first African American to hold the office. Obama previously served as the junior United States Senator from Illinois, from January 2005 until he resigned after his election to the presidency in November 2008.

President Obama has won the Nobel Prize for his Prague vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. The President set the stage for a world free of nuclear weapons in his Prague agenda. Since that time, he has commenced negotiation of a new arms

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<sup>38</sup> From *Les Prix Nobel en 1975*, Edited by Wilhelm Odelberg, (Stockholm: Nobel Foundation, 1976).

<sup>39</sup> From *Nobel Lectures, Literature 1901-1967*, Edited by Horst Frenz, Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1969.

control treaty with Russia; committed to seek ratification and entry into force of a global nuclear test ban treaty; served as the first U.S. president to chair a United Nations Security Council meeting on nuclear disarmament; pledged to secure all “loose nukes” within four years and far more. The President has not only stated his intention to pursue disarmament, he and his administration have pursued that intention with a fervor we have not seen from a U.S. President in years, maybe ever.

On April 8, 2010, President Obama, and President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia, signed an arms treaty that will slash their respective nuclear arsenals by a third. Symbolically, the signing took place in Prague. The two men shook hands to applause after signing what Obama called a historic agreement in the opulent setting of Prague castle in the Czech Republic. Obama said the new agreement made the US and the world more secure and helped stopped the drift in US-Russia relations.<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

Altogether there were twenty-two individuals with roots on the territory of the former Czechoslovakia, who were awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize. Only one third of them were actually born in the Czechlands or Slovakia which represents a great loss to these countries. Had they or their ancestors, stayed in their homeland, it is unlikely, however, that they would have achieved this honor, considering the unfavorable political and economic situation in the countries of their origin. In any case, twenty two Nobel laureates coming from such relatively small countries is nothing but remarkable.

In spite of the oppression under the Austrian Habsburgs, the magic of the cultural milieu of Prague, nevertheless, attracted a number of promising foreign scientists whom she gave a jumpstart in their successful careers lading to a Nobel Prize. This was certainly the case of Vladimir Prelog and even Albert Einstein.

It is generally believed that the process of selecting Nobel laureates is a serious one, nevertheless, as is shown in this paper, occasionally deplorable mistakes are made. This most certainly happened in the case of Lise Meinert. The decision not to honor her is even more inexcusable because it was made on account her being a woman and Jewish. Not to award Karel Čapek the Nobel Prize on the basis that he was antifascist at the advent of World War for fear of Hitler’s reaction, is incomprehensible by today’s standards.

Despite this author’s careful research, it would not be surprising if more Nobel laureates are found in the future with the Czech or the Slovak roots.

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<sup>40</sup> Barack Obama. *The Nobel Peace Prize 2009*. Stockholm: The Nobel Foundation, 2009; Jennifer Loven, “Obama in Prague. Russia Nuclear Arms Deal Signed with Medvedev,” *The Huffington Post*, April 24, 2010.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Milan J. Kubic: *From Prague to Jerusalem. An Uncommon Journey of a Journalist*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-087580-764-5. 312 pp.**

I have always considered memoir publications as important sources of history, particularly after I published my own personal memoir, *Czechmate. From Bohemian Paradise to American Haven* (2011). The present autobiographical account of Milan J Kubic. *From Prague Jerusalem. An Uncommon Journey of a Journalist*, is a splendid example of literature in this category. Interestingly, parts of his story, even age-wise (he is 3 years older), are not dissimilar from my own odyssey. Being a journalist, he wrote his memoirs in a highly readable, intimate and amusing style, although, here and there he used some uncommon words which forces one to look up their meaning in the dictionary.

Milan J. Kubic was born to a middle-class Prague family, his original name being Kubík. Like myself, he spent his childhood in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, witnessing the Communist takeover of his country in 1948. We were both young when we escaped from Czechoslovakia, ending up in the American zone of Germany. However, whereas he was successful on his first try, I was caught at the border and ended up in jail. Nevertheless, I was lucky next year, and after crossing the border, I was moved to a Displaced Persons Camp, which turned out to be in Ludwigsburg, a city in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, about 12 kilometers (7.5 mi) north of Stuttgart, the same camp where Kubic was moved earlier. We then waited there for the US visas to be able to immigrate to the US, although we apparently never met. Interestingly, he got an affidavit from his former boss, the *Svobodné Slovo* editor, Ivan Herben, with whom I became acquainted in New York and who became my good friend.

We both arrived in the US in the fifties, he in March, while I came one month earlier, where we worked at menial jobs before being able to attend university, get our degrees, pursuing our careers, he as a journalist, while I became a scientist. Milan J. Kubic graduated from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and served as a correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine from 1958 to 1989 covering Washington, South America, the Middle East, as well as Eastern and Western Europe. Prior to that he worked as a butler and factory worker. He also served in US Army intelligence unit during Senator Joe McCarthy's witch-hunting years.

Kubic made his journalist debut as a young budding student in the fall of 1945, launching a weekly newspaper *Žihadlo* (The Sting), which became a hit among his classmates. A barely legible mimeographed paper of a few pages extolled the quality of American life, while ridiculing the leadership of Josef Stalin. Unfortunately, the paper was of short duration, having been stopped by the Ministry of Interior. To his consternation, he later found out that it was his own cousin Pepík, who betrayed him and reported him to STB (Státní bezpečnost), the State Security, which was firmly under the Communist control. Paradoxically, some twenty-five years later, this cousin of his begged him to help him when he decided to also seek refuge abroad.

After completing the school, Milan Kubic landed a job as a cub reporter for the *Svobodné Slovo*, a major liberal Czech newspaper, where he remained until his dismissal, following the Communist putsch in February 1948. This was the reason why he decided to get out of Communist Czechoslovakia.

Kubic relates, in depth, his life in Czechoslovakia, both under the Nazis and under the Communists, his dramatic escape from Czechoslovakia and the conditions under which he lived in the German refugee camps. He also describes his harsh beginnings, as well as his wife's, whom he married before he immigrated to the US. Even though he hardly knew a word of English, he learned it on his own, to such a degree that he was capable of interrogating selected refugees from behind the Iron Curtain and write detailed reports about what they told him, when he worked for the Army intelligence unit during the Korean War.

He was almost thirty years old when he could go back to school and study journalism in earnest. By then he became an A student which led to his successful journalist career. The latter included stints as a correspondent in Washington, D.C. (1958-62), where he covered the White House during the last year of Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency, the US Senate run by Lyndon Johnson, and the campaign that elected President John F. Kennedy. Later he served as bureau chief in Rio de Janeiro (1963-67), Beirut (1967-71), Vienna (1972-73), Bonn (1973-75); and Jerusalem (1976-89).

Kubic characterized his stint in South America as "Frustrated in the Hemisphere." The four and half years that he spent in this region were physically the most demanding. Although he worked his heart out, the results were not fully satisfying. He especially disliked and quarreled with the *reformadores*. Not all his South American impressions were negative, however. In November 1965, he joined Bobby Kennedy upon his arrival in Lima. Kennedy deeply impressed him by telling the Latin Americans to stop their empty posturing and start making real reforms. Kubic also had an interesting encounter in the Brazilian jungle with a tall dignified looking stranger. When he introduced himself, stating his credentials, the stranger responded in fluent English: "How do you do? I am King Leopold of Belgium." The retired monarch, who was an amateur anthropologist gave him then detailed information and guidance about the Brazilian jungle park, where they had met.

In April 1967, while on assignment in Chile, Kubic was offered as his next beat the Beirut bureau. This was also the time when the Six Day War started. He then watched the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from Beirut. Kubic frequently reflected on his conflicting feelings about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Having the reputation of an objective both-sides reporter and not being Jewish, opened for him the door to Palestinians because they apparently trusted him, and took him over to show him the life in their PLO camps.

Immediately after the Six Day War, most of the countries on his beat, which included North Africa, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, closed their borders to US newsmen, since they considered them spies. Kubic decided to ignore border regulations and followed the Middle East story wherever it took him. Each time, he had to figure some ingenious way how to outsmart the system.

While in Beirut, Kubic was intrigued by the happenings in his native country: the Prague Spring and the Czech experiment of liberal “socialism with a human face” under the maverick Communist Party leader Alexander Dubček. When the Czech borders opened for travelers, unexpectedly, Kubic’s brother Mirek arrived in Beirut, where he brought him up-to-date on the fate of his family. His father and mother died. After their release from jail, they were assigned the worst and the lowest-paying menial jobs. His cousin Mila was fired from her bank job as a “bourgeois element” and sent to a border region to work as a lumberjack. His brother Mirek was discharged from the army and was sent to dig ditches and mix cement at a construction site. This was part of the regime’s punishment of the whole family, for Milan’s escape and his father’s apparent stint in the anticommunist underground.

Then came the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The abrupt collapse of the Prague Spring stranded thousands of vacationing Czechs and Slovaks in Vienna. They now were now struggling with the agonizing choice between remaining in the West or returning behind the Iron Curtain. *Newsweek* wanted Kubic to report the story, which led eventually to his new assignment in Vienna.

Although Kubic stayed in Vienna only one year and a half, this gave him the opportunity to cover Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary. He also succeeded in getting a two-week visa to Communist Czechoslovakia, after being, initially, turned down by the Czech Embassy in Washington. This visit was not happy because three two-sleuth teams constantly tailed him; nevertheless, he got the chance to talk to some ordinary people of his generation who had never joined the Communist Party. He even bumped into his brother Mirek in Prague, but he steered clear of him for both of their sakes.

Kubic’s assignment to cover East Europe was then enlarged by the addition of Western Europe to his beat. He moved from Vienna to Bonn. Moreover, he was also made Bonn bureau chief. Kubic found the new environment a mixed blessing. On one hand, West Germany was the opposite of the slothful morass in East Europe: it was a stellar showplace of modern technology and orderly achievement. On the other hand, Kubic still had his memories of World War II: the brutality and humiliation of the Nazi occupation of his native country. Whenever he talked to some elderly German, he always asked himself, what did that fellow do during the War? At the end of this tour, he played a role in debunking the presumed Hitler’s diaries, whose English language publication rights *Stern* magazine had offered to sell to *Newsweek*.

The last part of the book, which is both autobiographical and historical, concerns Kubic’s last stint in Jerusalem, Israel, from mid-February 1976 till 1989. Kubic found the country fascinating, especially for a reporter. He marveled at the enormous combativeness of Israeli politicians which contrasted to the country’s ethnocentrism, cohesiveness and the sense of one-family feeling which all the Jews possess. Israel’s success in creating a thriving Western society and nation impressed him greatly: a stable democracy, well-functioning institutions, cradle-to grave welfare and modern economy. Nevertheless, he also saw some negative features. Kubic questioned Israel’s legendary intelligence services, the government’s genius

for press relations, the double-faced occupation policy, etc. He also found faults with several reputed Israeli leaders. Nevertheless, generally, he was delighted by much of what he found in Israel, above all, by the people he dealt with as a journalist.

In many ways, this is a unique publication, which offers heretofore unknown information. Apart from the glimpses at the author's life, the monograph focuses on the world personalities whom Kubic met and the political environment in which the journalist happened to be. His unconventional characterization of historical figures who shaped the destiny of mankind throws a new light on the memorable events of the 1960-1990 period. This engrossing and riveting monograph, full of intrigue and insight, should appeal to all readers and historians interested in the world history and politics.

Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr.  
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**Heda Margolius Kovály and Helena Třeštíková, *Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History*. translated and edited by Ivan Margolius. Los Angeles: Doppel House Press, 2018. ISBN 9780998777009 (Hardcover), 9780997818475 (Paper), 9780997818499 (ebook), 160 pp.**

Heda Margolius Kovály (1919-2010) has had the misfortune of experiencing first-hand the worst that Czechoslovakia's twentieth-century history had to offer: the Nazi concentration camps and the Holocaust, the Slanský trial and Communism, as well as immigration. All this, she describes in *Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History*. The book is based on the transcript of a four-hour long interview that filmmaker Helena Třeštíková conducted with Kovály in her Prague apartment between August 28 and August 31, 2000. Czech television released the film, which bears the same title, in 2001.

Many *Kosmas* readers are familiar with Heda Margolius Kovály's life story, as she has recounted it in print several times. Canada-based '68 Publisher, headed by Zdena and Josef Škvorecký, brought out Kovály's first autobiography in 1972 under the title *Na vlastní kůži: Dialog přes barikádu*. This edition included Prof. Erazim Kohák's philosophical treatise on the era that Kovály describes. In the same year, Horizon Press published *The Victors and the Vanquished*, an English version. There Kovály's section remained the same, but Kohák rewrote his to be more intelligible to the American readers. In 1973, Weidenfeld and Nicholson issued a British version of Kovály's autobiography, which did not include Kohák's section. Plunkett Lake Press in 1986 published *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941-1968*, which is considered Kovály's definitive biography. Franci and Helen Epstein translated this edition to English with Kovály.

While *Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History* deals with the same events as the previous autobiographies, it is different in scope and methodology. The two authors have elaborated on Kovály's childhood and early adulthood and added an account of her life after she left Czechoslovakia in 1968. Ivan Margolius, Kovály's son from

her marriage to Rudolf Margolius, and Helena Třeštková each penned introductions to this volume. Margolius, who serves as the book's editor and translator, also has included illustrations, mostly photographs, and a timeline. Třeštková and Kovály wrote *Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History* in question and answer form with the former being the interviewer and the latter, interviewee.

Heda Margolius Kovály was born in Prague in 1919 in Prague. Her father, Ervin Bloch, was a partner in the Waldes Koh-i-Noor factory, which manufactured small metal objects, such as buttons, safety pins, and zippers. Heda lived an upper-middle-class life as she attended primary and secondary school. Her father, "a fervent Czech patriot (20)," admired and even knew personally many of the artistic and literary figures of the day, such as the Čapek brothers, Max Brod and František Kupka. Although her family was Jewish, Kovály did not see herself as different from her classmates. She writes: "I could never understand why we would have had greater problems or any other life than my friends at school (20)." On April 3, 1938, Heda married Rudolf Margolius.

After Bohemia and Moravia became Germany's Protectorate and Germany had conquered Poland, the Nazi authorities transported Heda, along with her husband, father, and mother (née Marta Diamantová) to the Łódź Ghetto. Then, they were sent to Auschwitz in 1944 and separated. Ultimately, every member of Heda's large extended family, except her and Rudolf, perished in the extermination camps. By a fluke, the Nazis transported Heda from Auschwitz to labor camps. Along with her friend Hanička and two other girls, she managed to escape during the death march. With great difficulty but also some luck, Kovály finds her way back to Prague. There, many of her former friends refused to shelter her, but a few did.

After the war she is reunited with her husband and hoped for a simple domestic life: "We wanted to have a baby, furnish our apartment, get a small dog, and make a home for ourselves. We wanted to be like other people (91)." Kovály did get one of her wishes: her son Ivan was born in February 1947. Rudolf and Heda and others who had survived the concentration camps, however, could not be like others. With so many of their innocent co-religionists and family members murdered, they felt the absolute need to achieve something to better the lives of others. For Rudolf, this meant membership in the Communist Party and accepting a post as Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade in 1949.

This fateful decision resulted in Rudolf Margolius being arrested and tried as part of Party Secretary-General Rudolf Slánský's "anti-state conspiracy" group. Of the 14 co-defendants, 11 were Jewish. The court found the innocent Margolius guilty. He was hanged on December 3, 1952. Heda sought help in vain from their highly placed friends. She lost her employment and apartment. Financially destitute and seriously ill, Kovály received scant medical attention. One friend did not abandon Heda, Pavel Kovály, whom she married in 1955. Slowly, Heda found her calling as a translator. First, she translated under Pavel's name, later as his co-translator and finally under her own name.

After the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion Kovály knew that "again I'll have to crawl into a hole. Again I'll have to look over my shoulder. Again I'll be an outcast. Again I won't be able to do anything. I'll be bound hand and foot and preached to



by some idiots (140).” She also was afraid that she would not again see her son, who had emigrated to Great Britain in 1966. She left Czechoslovakia and came to the United States, where her present husband had a temporary teaching position. After trying her hand at various jobs, including translating, she found satisfying employment at Harvard Law Library. In 1996, Heda and Pavel returned to Prague where they both died: he, in 2006 and she, in 2010.

The narrative arc of Heda story makes it as exciting as any thriller. Moreover, she has well mastered the emotional “hook” and the telling detail. It suffices to cite a few examples. In the Łódź Ghetto, Heda’s young cousin Jindříšek, before dying, asked her mother to sing to him “Where Is My Homeland?” and “Where Have You Gone, My Youth?” In her only visit with her husband before his execution, he tells her that he and his cellmate, possibly the former minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimír Clementis, have managed to whistle by heart the entire Dvořák *Cello Concerto*. The last words her husband spoke to her were that had read a very good book recently, *Men of Clear Conscience*.

Kovály is so adroit a storyteller that the reader cares for her and wishes for more information than the abbreviated format of *Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History* provides. What enabled Kovály to work as an illustrator and translator of English and French books when she only had a secondary education and married at the age of 19? Who was Pavel Kovály? What was their life together like? What did she translate for ‘68 Publishers who brought out books in Czech?

*Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History* is a perfect book for the general reader who wants to learn about Czechoslovak twentieth century history. It explains many of its aspects that are difficult for a non-East European to comprehend. Why did the Jews not forcefully resist the Nazis? Why did many, especially those who had survived the Nazi camps, so willingly join the Communist Party? For the East European specialist, the book offers details that illustrate genuine human experience of living in that place at that particular time.

If I were teaching presently, I would most certainly put *Hitler, Stalin and I: An Oral History* on a list of supplementary readings for my classes. I will also recommend it to any of my friends and relatives who show the slightest interest in Czechoslovakia’s history. Besides its pedagogical and informative value, this book is well and insightfully written and has the additional virtue of brevity.

Mary Hrabík Šámal  
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**Martin Nekola, *České Chicago* (Czech Chicago), Knížnice dějin a současnosti, vol. 64 (Prague: NLN, 2017). ISBN: 978-80-7499-505-5, 100pp.**

Martin Nekola’s *České Chicago* is a small, illustrated book about Czech Chicago for readers in the Czech Republic. Its six chapters, including the introduction, amount to barely 70 pages of text, and the pages are small. That’s not much space for a subject as big as Czech Chicago. Chicago arose as the second biggest city in America in the decades after the end of the Civil War in 1865. It

means that Chicago is bound up with America's transformation from a rural country into the biggest industrial economy in the world. Chicago is the capital of the Midwest, which remained the heartland of American industry into the second half of the 20th century, until global capitalism, Japanese industry and the Sunbelt migration reduced its predominance, so that we came to call this core American region the "Rustbelt." When the Great Plains became the biggest grain producer in the world and Texas the biggest livestock producer, Chicago supplied this vast American interior with farm equipment and mail-order goods, and it processed the food brought in from there. Immigrants did much of this work, and Chicago's population of Czech immigrants and their children grew to some 120,000 in the first quarter of the 20th century. More than one of every five Czechs in America lived in Chicago, and it was the biggest Czech city outside the Czech Lands and Vienna. All this makes Czech Chicago a big subject, one not easy to write about in 70 small pages.

When we think about Czech Chicago, we should always keep two facts in mind, and we find them mentioned in Nekola's book: (1) in January 1853 the railroad came to Chicago from the East, and from then on the city could use its location at the end of the Great Lakes to become the metropolis of the vast American interior, and (2) the 120,000 Czechs were only 5% of Chicago's 2.4 million people in 1914, and the Czechs were behind at least six other immigrant ethnic groups in numbers—Germans, Poles, Russians (Jews), Irish, Swedes and Italians.

Also, Nekola wrote this book for a popular audience in the Czech Republic and not strictly for his fellow scholars. We see this in the choices he made: Czech Chicago was many things, and we must choose which of them to write about. For one thing, Czech Chicago was certainly the lives and experience of hundreds of thousands of people and all the generations since the 1850s, but Nekola does not write about everyday life and ordinary people in Czech Chicago. Instead, he chose to write about prominent individuals, especially those in politics, and about dramatic events and extraordinary times. Nekola's book serves three purposes: (1) to revive the memory of Czech Chicago in the minds of Czech readers, (2) to create a positive and even heroic image of Czechs in Chicago for these readers to add to their national identity, and (3) to give them an exciting narrative they will want to read.

So, chapter 2 is about "Politika i politici" (Politics and politicians), and almost half its length is about Anton Cermak (1873-1933), who was elected mayor of Chicago on April 5, 1931, and died 18 days after a February 15, 1933, assassination attempt that seemed intended for the newly-elected American president, Franklin Roosevelt, to whom the mortally wounded Cermak said, "I'm glad it was me and not you! This country needs you!"

Chapter 3, "Za svobodné Československo" (For a free Czechoslovakia), is mostly about Czech Chicago in Thomas Masaryk's independence campaign in World War I, which produced the Czechoslovak Republic, and about Eduard Beneš and his campaign in World War II to restore Czechoslovakia after Adolf Hitler and Germany destroyed it. A high point was the arrival of Masaryk at 2 pm on May 5, 1918, at Chicago's Northwestern train station, and the enormous crowd of unknown

number, perhaps 100,000-200,000 people, that regaled and accompanied him on his two-hour trip from the train platform to his lakefront lodgings at the Blackstone Hotel on Michigan Avenue. Masaryk came to Chicago from revolutionary Moscow, which he left on March 7th, and he traveled on to Pittsburgh, to sign the May 30th agreement that would put Czechs and Slovaks together into a common state for most of the 20th century. As for Eduard Beneš, he arrived in New York on February 9, 1939, en route to his new job as a visiting professor at the University of Chicago, where Masaryk had lectured in 1902 about the Slavic world. Beneš returned to Czechoslovak politics in reaction to Hitler's takeover of the Czech Lands on March 15. He left New York on July 12, after the semester in Chicago, to return to Great Britain.

One story can make Czech readers feel good about themselves in a perverse way: on October 8, 1871, a great fire destroyed Chicago. It's an iconic Chicago event, and in the American popular imagination, it started when Mrs. O'Leary's cow knocked over a lantern. But, as we read in Nekola's chapter-long introduction, Czechs in Chicago told each other that it was one of the dancers and drinkers next door, at Křenk's beer hall, who tossed away a cigarette stub into Mrs. O'Leary's cow stall. So, it was the Czechs—and not the Irish—who may be behind the Great Chicago Fire, and they were sharp enough to keep it to themselves. More unflattering to the Czech self-image is that only some 3,000 Czech-Americans volunteered and trained for service in the World War I Czechoslovak legion that fought in France, after expectations ran to 60,000

Most of chapter 4, “České kauzy, slávy a strasti” (Czech causes, achievements and tragedies), is about the *Eastland* disaster (1915), sculptor Albín Polášek, publisher August Geringer and his star writer, Rudolf Jaromír Pšenka. Geringer became the biggest Czech newspaper and book publisher in America, and, so Nekola tells us, Geringer got his boost from the 1871 Chicago fire, because his was the only print shop in the city left standing. This remarkable claim seems to come from Milena Secká at the Náprstek Museum in Prague, who wrote about Geringer for a 2005 *Sdružení knihoven České Republiky* conference volume on “historical and rare book collections” in the Czech Republic. The *Eastland* was a ship chartered by the Western Electric Company on July 24, 1915, for a Saturday cruise on Lake Michigan for its employees: instead, it capsized in the Chicago River and drowned 844 people, including 220 Czechs. That was certainly a traumatic event, but no less important for our understanding of Czech Chicago would be a narrative about how so many Czechs came work at Western Electric and what their working lives were like.

Nekola doesn't give us such a narrative, but his book is not always about great men and events: in the same chapter, he evokes for us the world of Czech businesses in Chicago and their variety and ingenuity with some well-chosen examples. Triner's patent medicines grew beyond the Czech-American world, as did the Pilsen Lumber Company (1888), wooden-bed maker Antonín Matuška, and the three beer-brewing companies launched from 1891 to 1904 (Atlas Brewing Company, Garden City Brewery, Pilsen Brewing Company). The 1932 Transavia Film Corporation distributed films and gramophone records from Czechoslovakia. Chicago's 94

Czech savings and loan associations clustered on 22nd Street (renamed Cermak Road in spring 1933), called the “Bohemian Wall Street.” Czech banks, even Václav Kašpar’s big American State Bank, fell with many of Chicago’s other banks at the start of the Great Depression.

Likewise, chapter 1, “Ve víru spolkového života” (In the whirlpool of social life), is about the everyday Chicago of its many Czech associations, from the Slavonian Lincoln Rifle Company, Slavic Linden and *Národní jednota* founded in the 1860s and soon left behind, to the long-lived theatrical companies; the Hlahol choral, Sokol gymnastic and fraternal benefit societies; and the building, loan and homestead associations. The ČSPS and ČSA became the biggest Czech organizations, with hundreds of locals across the country, by providing not just fraternal insurance but also revelry and social life in their halls. Chicago associations sometimes raised money for worthy causes in Bohemia, and membership and service in associations was a matter of ostentatious prestige, recorded in anniversary publications and on gravestones. In his introduction, Nekola marks out the migration of Czech neighborhoods from Canal Street to Pilsen, Lawndale, the suburbs of Cicero and Berwyn, and beyond. He mentions neighborhood progression to “African- and Latin-Americans” but not how Pilsen has become the biggest Mexican neighborhood in the Midwest.

Chapter 5, “Ve jménu Boha i rozumu” (In the name of God and reason), is the last one and just 4 pages long, under half as much as the first four chapters, which are 11-14 pages each. Still, Nekola covers some of the most important facts about the long and heated rationalist-Catholic divide in Czech Chicago: (1) In a January 7, 1877, speech and mass rally, *Svornost* editor František Boleslav Zdrůbek urged his countrymen to free themselves from their domineering priest, Josef Molitor, and do without him in their marriage, funeral and baptismal ceremonies. That led to the Bohemian National Cemetery on Crawford Avenue (now Pulaski Road) in northern Chicago. Twenty Czech associations banded together to create it. An old-age home arose near the cemetery in 1896 and an orphanage in 1910. (2) Almost 30 Freethinker Czech schools arose in Chicago, versus just 9 Catholic schools, and in 1912 the *Sdružení českých svobodomyšlných škol v Chicagu* formed to coordinate and professionalize the Freethinker Czech schools, toward which it issued the monthly *Svobodná škola*. (3) Historian Jaroslav E. S. Vojan was moderator for ten years on a Freethinker radio station that went on air on January 7, 1934. A useful addition to this chapter would have been the idea that the rationalist-Catholic divide had a good side: its ardor motivated more thought, writing, organizing and other cultural production on both sides, as we read in Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (1990), about the Germans in New York. Another divide involved the socialists and anarchists as a third subculture, but Nekola treats it only very briefly in chapter 2.

In Nekola’s “Závěr” (Conclusion), just one page long, we read that today Czech institutions in Chicago include the Czech Republic’s consulate, an office of Czech Trade, the 1921 T.G. Masaryk Czech school in Cicero, the Velehrad Czech Catholic mission in Brookfield, restaurants and cafes, Czech NHL hockey players, the *Ústředna moravských spolků* and its Moravian Day picnic in a park in Brookfield

at the end of every July, the American Sokol, Bohemian National Cemetery, Chicagoland Czech-American Community Center, Czechoslovak American Congress, Czech & Slovak American Genealogy Society of Illinois, its Paul M. Nemecek Library and the Chicago-Prague Sister Cities project.

The best part of Nekola's book is on pages 53-57 (in chapter 3), on the Cold-War years, because this is the period he knows best from his research and writing. Today we like to imagine Czechs in America as very much against the Communist regime in Prague. But on these four pages, Nekola shows us just how divided they were in 1948 and for years thereafter.

At its May 15-16, 1948, convention at the Chicago Sokol hall, the *Československá národní rada americká* (ČSNRA, Czechoslovak National Council of America) resolved to abandon its policy of staying out of politics in the home country, because in its view, the Communists had imposed a dictatorship and deprived the Czechoslovak people of their power to decide matters for themselves. *Nelze mlčeti* (We cannot be silent): that was the title the ČSNRA put on its convention proceedings, which it published for distribution. Joe Martínek exposed Communist crimes and Soviet meddling in Czechoslovakia in an April 1948 brochure published in Cleveland, but he warned against the war against the Soviet Union that many émigrés hoped for, because it would destroy the world. Martínek was well-known in Czech America since his 1909 arrival as a Socialist newspaper editor, activist and wartime executive secretary of the ČSNRA. Some émigrés from Communism became officers in the ČSNRA, which supported the lecture tours of several émigré politicians—former Prague mayor Petr Zenkl (see Nekola's 2014 biography of Zenkl) and former ministers Václav Majer, Adolf Procházka, Hubert Ripka, Josef Černý and Juraj Slávik.

Meanwhile, the *České národní sdružení* (ČNS, Czech American National Alliance) and its chairman, Adolf Kačer, a "capable organizer," took a neutral attitude to the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. The ČNS had a more active membership than the ČSNRA and a large readership for its monthly organ, *Svobodné Československo* (Free Czechoslovakia). Kačer visited Czechoslovakia for two weeks in spring 1948 and was received by Communist Party chief and prime minister, Klement Gottwald and by several government ministers. Kačer praised the changes in progress in the country, as Prague's official diaspora magazine, *Československý svět*, reported in its April 17, 1948, issue. Kačer also harshly criticized the émigrés and predicted that Czech-Americans would not contribute a penny to their liberation campaign for Czechoslovakia. As late as 1956, the state security services in Prague reported that most Czech associations in Chicago were "progressive," meaning sympathetic to the Communist regime, and that they distributed appropriate literature and supported lectures and protests against Western imperialism and racial segregation. Nekola found this report, "Spolky československých krajanů ve Spojených státech (1. června 1956)," in the *Archiv bezpečnostních složek* (Archive of the state security services). One example was the *Český kroužek*, whose chairwoman, Anděla Menšíková, even attended the 1950 world peace conference in Warsaw as a delegate.

To counteract the Czech Sokol organization in America and its monthly *Sokol americký*, which stuck to their policy to stay out of Czechoslovakia's politics, Antonín Hřebík, who resettled in Chicago, founded a new organization (*Ústředí československého Sokola v exilu*) and periodical (*Sokol v exilu*). Hřebík was the émigré head of the *Československá obec sokolská*, the national Sokol organization in the homeland, which the Communists suppressed. Meanwhile, Gustav Pikal and his Communist weekly in Chicago, *Nová doba*, became targets of McCarthyism but survived to at least 1970. Czech Chicago's daily newspapers, *Svornost* (Concord) and *Denní hlasatel* (Daily herald), supported the émigrés and their *Rada svobodného Československa* (Council of Free Czechoslovakia), which was founded on February 25, 1949, and was quickly racked by the rivalries between parties carried to America from the homeland.

Martin Nekola has published two articles in the journal *Securitas Imperii* (see notes 119 and 122 in *České Chicago*) on Czech émigré politics in Cold-War America, one on the National Democratic Party of Karel Kramář and the other about the 1954 Congressional investigation of the former Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Trade and National Socialist émigré Hubert Ripka, an episode in the infamous crusade against alleged Communist agents and sympathizers in America that was inspired by the Wisconsin Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy.

A bitter watershed for the Czechoslovak émigrés in America was the 1956 revolution in Hungary, because America stood by as the Soviets restored the Communist regime by force: after this, it was hard for the émigrés to keep up hope and their inspiration to organize and carry on for the overthrow of the Communist regime in Prague.

Two appendices take up five pages that Nekola could have better used to extend his fine narrative about Czech Chicago: "Českoamerické spolky v Chicagu" and "Česká periodika vydávaná v Chicagu" are bare listings of Czech associations and periodicals, respectively, in Chicago, and they are no replacement for earlier and much fuller directories and bibliographies. Finally, the index only includes personal names: this is the common, unfortunate practice in Czech publications, and it is far less useful than indexes in American books of scholarship, which are full name and subject indexes.

Another strength of *České Chicago* is its sources. Nekola drew on what is now 150 years of literature in Czech Chicago, and he introduces sources into this literature that earlier writers neglected. He has done so much grant-supported research in so many American archives on Czechs in America that his fellow scholars in the Czech Republic will find it very hard to ever match him.

Martin Nekola's *České Chicago* is an example of a genre we don't much think about or always recognize, a genre we could call "short, popular introductions" to subjects which, in fact, have entire historical literatures behind them, from primary sources of many kinds to the writings of scholars who use them to produce later and more ambitious explanations of the subject. The three words for our imagined genre, "short, popular introduction," together imply certain limitations and aims. An "introduction" sounds to us like a promise to reveal for us (1) the entire subject or at least its main parts, (2) what other subjects it is itself part of, (3) its relative

importance and meanings, and (4) how it changed over time, or how it formed, developed and perhaps ended. We can also expect a literature review from an introduction. “Popular” implies a cluster of aims: the author wants to broaden the audience for a subject and to renew and broaden awareness of the subject, so as to encourage people to reconsider and reimagine it, to make it meaningful to a new generation and in a new historical period. “Short” seems already implied by “introduction,” but it reminds us that introductions can vary a lot in length, from hundreds of pages to just a few, and that length is a tradeoff: longer introductions give the author more room but take more time from the reader, and shorter introductions are convenient to the reader but cramp the author. Martin Nekola has given us one good example to follow and a good new book about Czech Chicago.

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**Daniel E. Miller, *The Influence of Václav Klaus on Czech Public Opinion Regarding the European Union, Carl Beck Papers, University of Pittsburgh, No. 2503, May 2017.*** Available online at [https://app.dimensions.ai/details/publication/pub.1092456062?and\\_facet\\_journal=jour.1145192](https://app.dimensions.ai/details/publication/pub.1092456062?and_facet_journal=jour.1145192).

Czechs seem to prefer their presidents to be distinctive personalities, and even *enfants terribles*, and their imprint on political life looms larger than their more limited presidential powers would suggest. All three presidents—Václav Havel, Václav Klaus, and Miloš Zeman—have their political roots in the late communist period, Havel as a dissident absurdist playwright, and Klaus and Zeman as economists at the “Prognostic” Institute, working in the “gray zone” between dissidence and regime identification. Havel, a Euro-Atlanticist, did not share the Euroskepticism of his successors. On the other hand, the Czech public has tended to align more skeptically toward transnational projects consistent with the Euro-critiques of Klaus and Zeman.

Although support for the European Union in the Czech Republic oscillates, it lags behind almost all European member states. In 2018 support was well above 50%, but still clocked in as the least enthusiastic EU public. Why? Some analysts point to a nationalist historical narrative in the education system; inadequate, crisis-driven coverage of the European Union itself; and historically-induced discomfort with ceding sovereignty to external powers, but these attributes are scarcely unique to Czechs. Nor is the practice of scapegoating the EU for unpopular developments while hauling in the subsidies (Hungary is a prime example of EU-baiting that *doesn't* so dramatically lower support for EU membership). Daniel Miller investigates this tepid Czech record of EU support through the lens of the Klaus presidency and Klaus's high-profile Euro-skepticism.

The tools of contemporary political science in comparative politics tend to be applied to a large-N statistical universe of country cases, in which leaders only figure in the database by regime type, or to trace complex historical processes in which leaders are contextualized, but not foregrounded, for their impact. As an

historian of modern Central Europe, in this and other work, Miller has sought to fill that gap and also build interdisciplinary bridges across it. His study of Vaclav Klaus and the European Union draws on public opinion polls from Public Opinion Research Center (CVVM) of the Czech Academy of Sciences and from the Eurobarometer to track the interaction between Klaus's consistent Euro-skeptic message and popular support for the European Union. Miller combines the attention to statistical analysis of the political scientist with the deep knowledge of the period that is emblematic of the historian (albeit the current community of western political scientists studying Czech politics is also deeply versed in country knowledge). He documents the long Klaus record of Euro-critique, demonstrably ideological and not merely tactical, but this has been done before. What is new and impressive is the data collection of public attitudes over time, consolidated into a single accessible format, allowing the reader to track alongside each other trends in presidential popularity and attitudes to the EU (the latter integrates three polling questions into a Euroskepticism Index), benchmarked by the EU average. This enables Miller to show a pattern in which the popularity of the President does track, albeit with limited statistical significance, with Euroskeptic attitudes, although even Klaus's own ODS paid him little heed in the early EU referendum and accession period.

The findings are suggestive, but as Miller warns, not conclusive and not uniquely causative of Czech attitudes. Of course, no one can nail this question of Klaus influence, because of the small number of yearly observations and the political and economic "noise level." The period covered was marked by the Eurozone crisis and the global recession, after all, included in Miller's analysis. In fact, he provides rich economic and political context for each polling period, as well as relevant samples of the vivid Klausian EU commentary.

This study suggests some interesting extensions. Klaus also had a bully pulpit for his views on the European Union as Prime Minister in the 1990s, so it would be interesting to start this inquiry about his impact much earlier. One drawback is the absence of Eurobarometer tracking polls in the 1990s. Eurobarometer only began polling candidate members in 2001, and any polling before that time would be sensitive to variations in question wording in domestic polls, something Miller has avoided. Still, it would have been useful to look at the pre-presidential levels of EU support back to 2001, when Klaus held the lesser office of parliamentary speaker, to have a baseline for what happened to EU support once he gained the presidential office.

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## Contributors

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**Zdeněk V. David** has been a frequent contributor to *Kosmas* and is a leading authority on the Bohemian reformation and its philosophical influences on the Czech national renaissance. He also explores the philosophical background of Tomáš G. Masaryk's political thought, as in his contribution to this issue. He is currently senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, where he was for many years the librarian. His book, *Finding the Middle Way: The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther* was published in 2003, and followed in 2010 by *Realism, Tolerance and Liberalism in the Czech National Awakening: Legacies of the Bohemian Reformation*.

**Ben Fox** is studying International Relations at the University of Nottingham. The grandson of refugees who came to Britain from Czechoslovakia in 1937, he participated in an ERASMUS placement at the Charles University, where he had the opportunity to take the course that provided the impetus for his reflections on how Czechs remember and commemorate their experiences during World War II.

**Carol Skalník Leff** is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. She has written two books on Czech and Slovak history and politics, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation vs. State* (1997) and *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987* (1988, paperback 2014) and articles and book chapters on post-communist elites, East European integration into the EU and minority politics in Eastern Europe.

**Marty Manor Mullins** completed her Ph.D. in East Central European History at the University of Washington in 2013. With funding provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in conjunction with the Fulbright Program, she conducted research for her dissertation in Košice, Slovakia, a city where she has lived and worked for 7 years. Her published work focuses on Košice and eastern Slovakia's experience of Czechoslovakia's 1948 Communist takeover, 1968 Soviet invasion, and 1989 Velvet Revolution. A regular participant at the Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEES) Conferences, she serves as Officer at Large for the Slovak Studies Association. Dr. Mullins currently teaches at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana

**Jana Pátková** makes her debut as a contributor to *Kosmas* with this issue. She is currently an assistant professor on the faculty of the Department of Central European Studies of the Philosophical Faculty at the Charles University in Prague. A native of Duchcov, Dr. Pátková studied at the University of Ostrava and the Charles University, and has held teaching positions at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest as well as at Charles University. Her scholarly interests focus on the history of Slovak literature, contacts between Czech and Slovak literature, and their wider Central European context. In addition to many analytical articles, she has published translations from the Slovak in Czech literary journals.

**James W. Peterson** was for many years Professor and Head of the Political Science department at Valdosta State University in Georgia, USA, a position from which he retired in 2015. He has published many works on Czechoslovak, Czech and Slovak political leadership including military issues, and his present research concerns the post-1989 Czech communist party and Czech politics regarding NATO and EU membership. He was also the long-time editor the biannual *Czech and Slovak History Newsletter*, for the membership of the Czechoslovak Studies Association.

**Mary Hrabík Šámál**, *Kosmas* Associate Editor in charge of book reviews, has retired from teaching at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Her book chapters and articles on Czech, Slovak and East European politics, the dissident movement, women, and culture have appeared on both sides of the Atlantic in publications, such as *Cross Currents*, *Proměny*, *Osteuropa*, *East European Quarterly*, *Bohemia: Jahrbuch des Collegium Carolinium* and *Kosmas*. She has maintained an active interest in Czechoslovak agrarianism, the subject of her Ph. D. dissertation, and co-edited along with Jiří Šouša and Daniel E. Miller, *K úloze a významu agrárního hnutí v českých a československých dějinách* (2001). Šámál holds an M.A. in political science from Fordham University and a Ph.D. from at The Pennsylvania State University, She has also published translations into English from Czech, Slovak, and other languages.

**Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr.** is one of the founding members and a past President of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU). He is a native of Mladá Boleslav, Czechoslovakia, who has lived in the US since 1950. In addition to enjoying a complete professional career as a biochemist, nutritionist and cancer researcher, he is an authority on immigration history from the territory of the former Czechoslovakia. He was instrumental in establishing the National Heritage Commission toward the preservation of Czech and Slovak cultural heritage in America. Among his many publications on Czech and Slovak topics are *The Czechoslovak Contribution to World Culture* (1964), *Czechoslovakia Past and Present* (1968), *Postavy naší Ameriky* (2000), *Czech American Historic Sites, Monuments and Memorials* (2004), *Czechoslovak American Archivalia* (2004), *Czech and Slovaks in America* (2005), and *On Behalf of Their Homeland: Fifty Years of SVU* (2008).

## Advice to Prospective Authors

*Kosmas* is an interdisciplinary journal devoted primarily to publishing scholarly research in all relevant fields on topics related to Czech, Slovak, or Central European affairs in general; research materials, memoirs, or creative writing (in translation or original) may also occasionally be published. Manuscripts submitted for review should normally be no longer than 25-30 pages, double spaced, with one-inch margins. We publish references in footnote format, not in-text format, and would appreciate it if submissions were formatted with footnotes. Book reviews should be from 500-700 words and should be formatted after the example of reviews printed here.

Manuscripts may be submitted in English, Slovak, Czech, French or German. Wherever possible, an English translation should accompany any manuscript in a language other than English. *Kosmas* publishes only in English.

Manuscripts may be submitted in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx) or, if the author does not use Microsoft Word, in Rich Text format (.rtf). Authors should pay careful attention to diacritical marks for words not in the English language. Manuscripts should be submitted via email to the editorial address [agnew@gwu.edu](mailto:agnew@gwu.edu). *Please be sure to include the keyword "Kosmas" in the subject line of the email.* Electronic submission is preferred. Contributions should be double-spaced for the entire text, including block quotations and notes. Book titles and non-English words should be formatted in *italic* font. Use *notes* (footnotes preferred) and not a "Works Cited" form for references. Transliterations of the Cyrillic alphabet should follow Library of Congress guidelines. Submissions will be edited to conform to standard academic spelling and usage in American English. For all other matters of style, a recent number of *Kosmas* or the current edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* should be consulted.









