
The American Bulletin

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Our 44th year of publication

THOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK **President Liberator of Czechoslovakia**

** March 7, 1850 - † September 14, 1937*

"Between the love for one's nation, the love for one's country, and humanity there is no disagreement; as it is, it is between modern nationalism and humanity. Already that new and foreign word indicates that patriotism as our revivalists demanded it, and lived it, is something different from the nationalism of today.

As far as our national programme is concerned, remember what I told you with regard to the development of Europe, and to our own history, that is that we must take a hand in world politics, and consequently be in lively and friendly contact with other nations. Our national revival is a child of Enlightenment and of late Romanticism, it sprang from the humanitarian ideals of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries which were broadcast in France, in Germany, everywhere. Humanity - that is indeed our national programme, the programme of Dobrovský, Havlíček, and of Komenský in his day, of our kings George, and Charles, and of St. Venceslas."

CZECHOSLOVAK INDEPENDENCE DAY **Chicago**

"October 28" will be remembered on October 28, Saturday evening at the CNCA Convention dinner which will be held at KLAS Restaurant, Cicero, IL.

BLAZING NEW TRAILS

Many of the activities of the Czechoslovak National Council of America during the past year were oriented toward helping the newly born democracy in Czechoslovakia. We watched closely the first uncertain steps of the new republic and on several occasions we cautioned against abandoning the ideals of Masaryk and advocated the preservation of a common state of Czechs and Slovaks in whose behalf the CNCA faithfully led the

struggle to restore democracy in Czechoslovakia so wantonly destroyed by the communist coup d'etat of 1948. The same message was delivered in person by the representatives of the CNCA, its president, Dr. Rozboril, the vice-president Ing. Papanek, Dr. Chalupa and Dr. Valusek and other members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, during several conferences held with the new political leaders in Czechoslovakia. The identical point of view was conveyed by the CNCA to numerous visitors from Czechoslovakia, including the Premier of the Czech Republic, Dr. Petr Pithart and his entourage.

A great deal more was accomplished, however, than merely a reestablishment of direct communications. At the beginning of 1990, the CNCA launched a fund raising campaign, "Americans for Czechoslovakia", which was generously endowed from the treasury of this organization. This fund raiser is a solid proof of the strong ties that exist between the Czechoslovak-American community and the old homeland. All gifts from this fund raiser were allocated after careful deliberation and they have fulfilled their purpose; they contributed toward the expansion of free Czechoslovak press, toward the restoration of advanced studies of political science, and toward furnishing certain hospitals with essential equipment and medical supplies. This funding program is planned on a long term basis and is expected to benefit many worthwhile causes.

During the past few years the CNCA has initiated important project to place a bust of President Thomas G. Masaryk on permanent display in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.

During the 82 years of its existence, the Czechoslovak National Council of America was not merely a witness but a significant contributor to the national liberation and attainment of democracy in Czechoslovakia. After the completion of this goal, the CNCA has always concentrated its attention upon the basic mission - the revival and maintenance of our culture and traditions in

the United States. The CNCA will remain dedicated to this task and will rely again, as it had in the past, upon the support and cooperation of all loyal Czechoslovak compatriots.

In the Crucible of the Great War

“Although we have become faithful sons and daughters of this our new homeland, we remain still sons and daughters of our Czechoslovak people. Our nation has eleven million souls. Even if they wanted to, Czechoslovaks could not resolve their vital battles and struggles only through physical force... The Czechoslovak nation was always aware of it. In its entire history, it therefore tried to excel by its spiritual, rather than physical, strength... Our Czechoslovak nation built for itself in the heart of Europe a democratic republic of which also we, American Czechoslovaks, have every right to be proud. Therefore we stand with our nation. We are proud of its past and we honestly strive for its future freedom. We are united, firm and unanimous, aware of our mission in the history of our crucified nation: while slowly passing away and dying out we stand as a steady shield and support of our nation in the old country and we strive with all our strength to save its life in liberty... We stand with the democratic America. Therefore we, Americans of Czechoslovak origin, will support our President. Faithfully, with resolve and perseverance until the victorious end. As we followed Woodrow Wilson and T. G. Masaryk twenty years ago, we will follow F. D. Roosevelt and Dr. E. Beneš today. This is the program of democratic Czechoslovak America.

Zeman's government begins second half of term

The minority Social Democrat government of Prime Minister Miloš Zeman began the second half of its four-year mandate with its August 24 Cabinet session. The agenda of the meeting, which lasted late into the evening, counted an unusually high number of 50 items and had another 20 points of information.

One of the items was the 2001 budget proposal. Government speaker Libor Rouček said next year's deficit should not exceed 20 billion crowns, budget priorities will be education and the schools. The daily Lidové noviny said state institutions were asking for 94 billion crowns more than they received this year, although such an increase would represent about 15 percent of this year's budget.

From Carolina

Sport - Czech Republic sends 126 athletes to Sydney Olympic Games

A plenary meeting of the Czech Olympic Committee (COV) approved August 14 the athletes for the Czech delegation to the Olympic Games in Sydney. The Czech Olympic expedition will number 200 - 126 athletes and 74 trainers, physicians, nurses and others. The track and field athletes represent the largest group - 25 - in the delegation, followed by canoeists (19) and soccer players (18). The Czech Olympic Committee will award 1 million crowns to the winner of a gold medal, a silver medal will be rewarded by 500,000 crowns and a bronze medalist will get 300,000 crowns.

From Carolina

From The Prague Post

CNCA CONVENTION 2000 Looking to the future

The main issue on the agenda of the July meeting of the Board of Directors of the Czechoslovak National Council of America was the preparation of the upcoming Convention. The Board discussed and approved proposals of its Convention Committee: First, to increase the participation and responsibilities of outlying branches in the decision making process of the Council, to be accomplished by increasing their voting power at the Convention and by an enhanced role of the Council's Executive Committee. Second, to ensure and control the use and application of funds.

DO THEY LIKE US?

Not much, it would seem. In spite of ties of love between relatives and of affection between friends, the general public in the Czech Republic has no idea of the amount of work Czechoslovaks abroad did in the interest of their freedom. They therefore feel our desire to share in the shaping of their future as unwelcome intrusion. This is at least the picture emerging from public opinion poll released last year.

First the good news: 70% would welcome increase of relations between the Czech Republic and the main associations of their compatriots abroad. 66% would like to have more information about the life of their compatriots.

Now the sad news: Only 37% of respondents believed that we are sincerely interested in personally contributing to the well-being of the Czech Republic, 39% disagree and 24% have no opinion. 72% are convinced that the majority of Czech abroad are wealthy, and therefore should not raise any demands on the Czech

Republic. Only 47% would approve that pensions and retirement benefits be paid to those living persons.

REMEMBERING 1968

A commemorative laying of wreaths in front of the Czech Radio building in Prague 2 on August 21 highlighted observances of the 32nd anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet-led Warsaw Pact troops. About 200,000 troops and 2,000 tanks invaded on the night of August 20-21, 1968, putting an end to the liberal Prague Spring reform movement. About 100 people died during the invasion, including 15 in front of Czech Radio, at Vinohradská 12.

ELECTION LAW

Constitutional Court is reviewing a request by President Václav Havel to annul parts of the controversial amendment to the election law recently passed by Parliament. Havel says the amendment restricts political competition, hinders coalitions and transforms the constitutionally-based proportional system to a majority system. The court is likely to rule by year's end.

TOURISTS GALORE

Nearly 49 million foreigners visited the Czech Republic in the first six months of 2000, three million more than in the same period last year. Tourism officials said more visitors were venturing outside Prague. There has been an increase in visitors from Israel, South Korea and Japan.

IS THERE A CENTRAL EUROPE?

When evaluating the possibilities of a U.S. policy in Europe it is necessary to take into account history.

Proponents of the "end-of-history" theory assert that today's man, civilization, and technology are so different from the past that history can be discounted in planning the future. This assumption is doubtful in general, but it definitely is wrong when dealing with Europe. To understand Europe, to grasp the roots of the war in Bosnia, for instance, it is necessary to go back centuries, actually all the way towards the final centuries of the Roman empire, when its division into a western part ruled from Rome, and an eastern part ruled from Constantinople (today's Istanbul) caused each of its parts develop differently. *In the West*, civilization was preserved and spread from Rome. Latin script became common, a competition between the secular and spiritual institutions developed and made possible free thought, science, industrialization, and democracy. *In the East*, civilization spread from Constantinople.

Modified Greek script (Cyrillic) became common. Fusing of spiritual and secular authority in the hands of the Emperor ("caesaropapism") prevented the development of free thought and of democracy. Agriculture has remained the basis of its economy. Absence of public education and the difference of script acted as an efficient cultural "iron curtain" excluding western ideas. This area constitutes Eastern Europe.

Between them is located an area which belonged to the cultural sphere of Rome, but where democracy was introduced merely after the First World War and with the exception of Czechoslovakia lasted only briefly to be replaced by dictatorships.

Culturally and by inclination its people identify with the West. They have the same script as the West and went through the same process of renaissance, reformation and development of science. They were affected by ideas of democracy and industrialized even under despotic governments. Because it lacks long democratic traditions and in this regard differs from the West, this area is often considered a part of the East. This is wrong. These states constitute a geopolitical unit with its own specific culture and history different both from West and East Europe - *Central Europe*.

In the last two centuries this area has become the object of power struggle between the West and the East and by the Yalta agreement was assigned to the East; but the differences between Central Europe and the East proper are such that it could be incorporated into and held by the East only against the will of its inhabitants and by force. It broke away from the East at the first opportunity. A vivid example of this incompatibility of Central Europe with the East can be found in the civil war in Yugoslavia where countries belonging to Central Europe were joined in one state with countries belonging to the eastern cultural sphere. The history of the last half century proves empirically that the cultural differences between nations based on the tradition of autocratic rule and orthodox Christianity and nations that developed under the influence of constitutional rule and catholic Christianity are too deep to permit Central Europe to be absorbed by the East. For this reason, ceding the states of Central Europe to the East explicitly or implicitly, by commission or omission, would reopen an old source of unrest, violence and instability.

This recognition is not new. Famous is Havlíček's conclusion from his visit of Russia: "I left as a Slav, I returned as a Czech." To bridge this gulf, more than the goodwill of a handful of Russian reformers will be needed.

From Czech the News

SOLDIER OF MISFORTUNE

“Svejk,” a biting anti-war tale of a survival-bent Everyman, gets an English retelling that captures the charm of the original Czech novel.

“Catch-22,” Joseph Heller’s darkly comic World War II novel about the insanity of war and the absurdity of military bureaucracy, appears on everyone’s list of classic, must-read fiction.

Critics have said the book took the war novel to a new level.

But some 40 years before Heller dreamed up John Yossarian and the term “Catch-22” entered the culture, a Czech named Jaroslav Hasek wrote a biting, satirical, antiwar novel about a survival-bent Everyman that cuts just as deep.

It was called “The Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Svejk,” and along with “A Farewell to Arms” and “All Quiet on the Western Front,” it was one of the great novels to emerge from World War I.

The iconoclastic Hasek, who died in 1923 - coincidentally the year of Heller’s birth - has a big reputation in Europe. But “Svejk” is virtually unknown to most Americans.

Zenny K. Sadlon and Mike Joyce mean two things. Our main goals were a faithful translation that would

appeal to popular readers everywhere.

Hasek, who was born in Prague in 1883, started out in life as a bank clerk, although he was writing satirical articles for Czech newspapers at 17.

After being drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I, Hasek was captured on the Russian front and held as a prisoner of war.

Upon his return to Prague, the capital of the newly created country of Czechoslovakia, Hasek devoted himself to writing.

David Powelstock, assistant professor of Russian and Czech literature at the University of Chicago, called Hasek a “central figure in Czech literature.”

“Hasek was a very erudite, literary person, and with the character Svejk he veils a fairly serious indictment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire,” according to Powelstock. “It sort of echoes the way Czechs and some other East Europeans responded to later events of the 20th Century, with what one might call a small-nation mentality. They maintain a sense of sanity and perspective through irony and humor.

“There’s no doubt that the scenes (in the book) are brilliant, but the book’s real power is the creation of Svejk and the way he interacts with his world, which manages to reveal its absurdity.” *By Connie Lauerman*

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Czechoslovak National Council of America
2137 Lombard Avenue, Room 202
Cicero, Illinois 60804-2037 • USA

Edited by Olga Kovarova

Phone: 708.656.1117
Fax: 708.656.5611

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