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The Tenth World Congress of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, Inc.

Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
October 17-19, 1980

The full program of the Congress, with additional information about the society, its activities and goals, was published as No. 3 of this **Bulletin**. The text of the proclamation of October 17, 1980 as Czechoslovakia Day by Marion Barry, Jr., Mayor, District of Columbia, was also included. Below we reprint two more official documents: greetings by President Jimmy Carter and by Ronald Reagan, then candidate for the presidency, who both recognize the importance of the Society's efforts to promote free Czechoslovak culture throughout the world.

Abstracts of papers presented at the Congress and a special folder concerning the Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Crafts by Czech and Slovak Artists Living Abroad accompanied the registration packet, and some are still available from SVU Books.

Jan Triska, Past President of the Society, and Leopold Pospisil, the new President, stressed in their reports the need to recruit members interested in Czechoslovak culture, regardless of ethnic origin; the need to publish in English and thereby reach a broader audience; and the need to broaden the Society's financial base to be able to accomplish the latter goal.

Membership forms may be requested from and contributions sent to: SVU, 2067 Park Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20010, phone (2;2) 387-8580. Annual membership dues are U.S. \$16.00, single; \$22.00, couples; \$5.00 students. All contributions are tax-deductible.

THE WHITE HOUSE

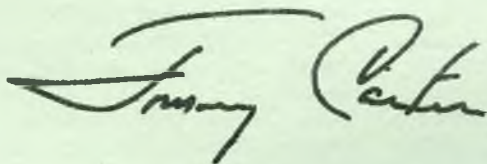
WASHINGTON

October 16, 1980

The Tenth World Congress of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences marks a brilliant record of service to a splendid legacy and to its dynamic influence throughout the world.

Representing men and women who have achieved distinction in virtually all areas of intellectual, artistic and scientific endeavor, you have carried forward the great humanistic tradition of your ancestral homeland. And you have crystallized for the world the impact which so many persons of Czech and Slovak descent have had, and continue to have, on cultural vitality and social progress. I know you will further enhance this excellent reputation in your third decade

I am proud to welcome you to our Nation's Capital and equally proud to acknowledge and applaud your important contributions to the enrichment of our American way of life.



Bulletin, edited by Zdenka E. Fischmann, Box 134, Corona, CA 91720 and Michael Heim, Department of Slavic Languages, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024
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DEAR DR BORKOVEC

I WISH TO EXTEND MY GREETINGS TO ALL THOSE WHO WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE TENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIETY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS WEEKEND. THE WORK OF THE SVU IS COMMENDABLE IN PROMOTING AND PRESERVING THE CZECH AND SLOVAK CULTURES IN THE UNITED STATES. THROUGH ITS PUBLICATIONS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, IT HAS ENSURED THAT THE ACCUMULATED HISTORY OF THE CZECH AND SLOVAK PEOPLES WILL CONTINUE TO BRING FORTH THE BEST OF THEIR TALENTS AND INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITIES. NANCY JOINS WITH ME IN OFFERING OUR MOST SINCERE WISH FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING. SINCERELY

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WU ACT WHEN

New Officers of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, Inc.

On Friday, October 17, 1980, elections of officers for the period 1981 and 1982 were held during the General Assembly session, with the following results:

Executive Board

President: Leopold J Pospisil, Anthropology, Yale U., New Haven, CT

Vice-Presidents:

Karel B. Absolon, Medicine, University of Illinois, Urbana, and National Institutes of Health

Milan P. Getting, Jr., Electrical Engineer, Pittsburgh, PA

Henry Kucera, Slavic Languages and Linguistics, Brown U., Providence, RI

Jiri Nehnevajsa, Sociology, U of Pittsburgh, PA

Peter A. Toma, Political Science, U of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

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Treasurer: Frank J. Marlow, Royal Leasing Corporation, Los Angeles, CA

Past-Presidents ex officio:

Rene Wellek, Comparative Literature, Yale U., New Haven, CT

Jaroslav Nemeč, Retired Librarian (Forensic Medicine), Washington, D.C.

Jan Mladek, Retired Director, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.

Francis Schwarzenberg, Political Science, Loyola U of Chicago

Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr., Director, Agency for the International Development, Washington, D.C.

Jan Trisak, Political Science, Stanford U., Palo Alto, CA

Also elected were: the 30-member SVU Council, auditors of the accounts, and members of the Conciliation and Arbitration Committee.

Personalia

Leopold Jaroslav Pospisil was born in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia, on April 26, 1923. When the Czechoslovak universities reopened in 1945, he studied law at Charles University in Prague. After leaving the country in 1948, he spent one year in Germany, studying at Masaryk University in Ludwigsburg, and then came to this country. In 1950 he received a B.A. in sociology from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon; in 1952 an M.A. in anthropology from the University of Oregon, Eugene; and in 1956 a Ph.D. in anthropology from Yale University. In 1969 the Willamette University granted him an honorary Sc.D. degree.

Dr. Pospisil's main theoretical interests have crystalized over the years of teaching and fieldwork into the areas of law and social control, political and social structures, formal and quantitative analysis in anthropology, and economic anthropology, as exemplified by the ethnic groups he has investigated: the Hopi Indians in Arizona (1952), the Kápauku Papuans in Netherlands New Guinea (1954 through 1979), the Nuonmut Eskimos of Alaska

(1957) and the Tirolean peasants of the Obernberg Valley (1962 - 1980). By studying his subjects at regular intervals, he has been able to follow their acculturation patterns in times of increased contact with the "modern world." Many fellowships and research grants have facilitated his labors, some of which continue as long-term projects.

Currently, Dr. Pospisil is Professor of Anthropology at Yale; Director of the Division of Anthropology of the Peabody Museum, and Editor of Yale's Publications in Anthropology, and has been a visiting professor at many universities in the U.S. and abroad (e.g., Manchester, Freiburg, Munich, etc.) He has been an active member of SVU for many years and belongs to a number of professional societies as well (the American Anthropological Association, the New York Academy of Sciences, etc.) He frequently participates in national and international conferences and symposia relating to his several fields of expertise.

Many of his numerous articles, published in an impressive selection of learned journals or as contributions to specialized compendia, deal directly with his main research, while others are more theoretical formulations of his opinions or reviews of books in his various specialties. Six of his books and monographs are devoted to the Kapauku Papuans, and a new, expanded edition of **The Kapauku Papuans of West New Guinea** (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978) is now available. He is currently updating the results of his research in the Tirol, and has also written a textbook, **Man and Culture. The Ethnology of Law** (Menlo Park, CA: Cummings Publishing Co., 1978) treats yet another aspect of his many-faceted career

*

Dr. Ernest Sturc, a prominent and active member of SVU, died on October 27, 1980 in Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C. He was born on his parents' farm in Czechoslovakia and earned a Doctor of Law degree from Comenius University, Bratislava, in 1938. He then came to this country and studied economics at the University of Chicago.

In 1942, Mr. Sturc joined the Czechoslovak Information Office in New York and became a member of the Czechoslovak Government in exile. He was secretary of the Czechoslovak delegation to the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference which founded the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and was a delegate to the 1945 San Francisco Conference, which established the United Nations. He became a U.S. citizen in 1948.

Mr. Sturc joined the International Monetary Fund in September 1946 as a Division Chief in the Research Department. In 1951 he was promoted to the position of Assistant Director of the European Department, and in 1953 he became Deputy Director. In 1965 Mr. Sturc was appointed Director of Exchange and Trade Relations Department, and held that position until the time of his retirement in January, 1980.

In this position Mr. Sturc coordinated IMF's assistance to developing nations, monitored the effect of exchange and trade relations on the world economy and insured cooperations between the fund and other international financial institutions.

By Frank Meisner, Bethesda, MD

*

From Montreal comes the sad news that **Dr. Jiri Skvor** died on January 22, 1981 after a short illness at the age of 64. Dr. Skvor, who is perhaps better known as the poet Pavel Javor, had recently been re-elected as a member of the SVU Council. We refer our readers to the evaluation of his life and work in SVU Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 5-6.

SVU Connections

SVU members participate in a wide variety of other scholarly and cultural organizations, many of which share certain interests and goals with SVU.

One such organization is the **American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS)**, which holds both yearly national conventions and more frequent regional meetings. Most of its membership consists of university teachers in the fields of language, literature, history, economics, and political science.

The highlight of last November's convention in Philadelphia was a panel organized by Professor Antohin Liehm of the University of Pennsylvania on the state of contemporary Czech literature, both in Czechoslovakia and abroad. Four outstanding representatives of Czech literature spoke before an enthusiastic audience of several hundred. Pavel Kohout described the working of the Czech variant of samizdat, Edice Petlice; Milan Kundera essayed a definition of the place of Czech literature in the context of world literature (his talk, "The Czech Wager" appeared in the January 22, 1981 issue of the *New York Review of Books*); Arnost Lustig characterized the role of the holocaust in recent Czech literature; and Josef Skvorecky gave an introduction to the wealth of Czech literature currently being written and published in the West.

In conjunction with the AAASS convention the University of Pennsylvania sponsored a lecture by the award-winning Mexican novelist, Carlos Fuentes, on the works of Milan Kundera and a lecture by Kundera on Kafka and Prague. Kundera's latest novel, **The Book of Laughter and Forgetting**, received a rave review in the *New York Times* on the day he gave his lecture.

*

The **Comenius World Council** (247 South Street, Hartford, CT 06114) has recently organized two congresses at Koenigstein, near Frankfurt am Main. The congresses, which were held in 1976 and 1979, attracted many scholars, educators, artists, and writers. They also served as a meeting place for expatriate alumni of Comenius University, Bratislava. Rudolf Kreml, a teacher of modern languages and member of SVU, is secretary of the organization. The third World Comenius Congress will take place at Koenigstein in July, 1982 following the fifth Jubilee Festival of Czechoslovak Sokols Abroad in Vienna.

*

Another organization of interest is the **International Council of Jews from Czechoslovakia, (ICJC)** incorporated in London and sponsor of the **Czechoslovak Jewish Aid Trust**. The society has been headed for several years by SVU member Karl Baum and has published a twelve-page quarterly **Newsletter** for more than ten years. The **Newsletter** features articles on the Jewish community in Czechoslovakia, activities of members abroad, and various historical and current items of social and cultural interest. Here is a sampling from recent issues: information about 1564 Torah scrolls from pre-war Czechoslovakia that are now kept at the Westminster Synagogue of London, whenever one of them is lent to a synagogue in any Western country; the estimated number of Jews remaining in Czechoslovakia is between ten to fifteen thousand; the archives of the composer Jaromir Weinberger (1896-1967) have been transferred from St. Petersburg, Florida to Jerusalem, and further memorabilia are sought for the collection; a Memory Bank section is accepting personal reminiscences about events and personalities from the past; the **Newsletter** has requested information about the children's opera **Brundibar** for possible TV production by the BBC (see *SVU Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 2 pp. 14-15)

for an answer.) Many libraries and organizations from various countries are ordering bound copies of the first ten volumes and subscribing the *Newsletter*. Inquiries should be addressed directly to ICJC, 12/13 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LH, England.

*

Less known is the Swiss **Leos Janacek-Gesellschaft** which was founded on October 11, 1969 in Zurich and is the only organization in the West dedicated to the composer. It publishes a newsletter in German with translations of Janacek's correspondence, articles about him, an updated international bibliography and discography, and information about Janacek performances the world over. The Society also organizes lectures, exhibitions, concerts and broadcasts of Janacek music throughout Switzerland. In November, 1980 it counted 151 members.

Dr. Jakob Knaus (Ruetiweg 87, CH-3072 Ostermundigen, Switzerland), who works with Swiss Radio and Television, has been President of the society since its inception.

What's Your Thing?

Here is the continuation of "our things" that might interest you. We plan to keep enlarging this section in terms of categories and information. The Secretary General, all officers of the Society and the editors of this *Bulletin* (all of whose addresses appear on the first page) will be glad to serve as liaisons between SVU members and interested readers. Communication is one of our main aims.

MEDICINE AND PSYCHIATRY

The Surgeon's Surgeon, Volume I (Laurence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1979, \$14.50) by Karel B. Absolon, Professor of Surgery and Chairman of the Department of Surgery, University of Illinois, Urbana, is the introductory volume of a three-volume biography of the founder of modern surgery, Theodore Billroth. Dr. Absolon's work deserves attention. Despite professional obligations as both a practitioner and teacher of surgery, he has devoted some ten years of labor to assembling his sources.

Dr. Absolon, SVU Vice-President 1981-82, hails from a distinguished family in Czechoslovakia known for their extensive cultural interests, a quality manifest in the author of this biography as well. His father, of the same name, was an internationally recognized archeologist with a broad background in geography and archeology, who traces his origins back four centuries to the Wankel family in Hammelburg, Germany, which in this century produced the inventor of the "Wankel" engine.

Absolon has chosen to produce a chronological narrative, interweaving family life with educational, professional and cultural pursuits during one of the most attractive and fascinating periods in European cultural history, the so called *belle epoque* of the nineteenth century. The subject of his biography is a man of many moods who, like Pasteur, was fearless in the defense of his beliefs. Absolon stresses Billroth's associations with prominent scientists of his time: Georg Meissner, the discoverer of intestinal nerves; Johannes Mueller, the founder of modern physiology; Rudolph Virchow, the creator of modern pathology; Robert Koch, the discoverer of tubercle bacilli, etc. He deftly integrates Billroth's close friendship with Johannes Brahms into the story of his medical pursuits.

Billroth's professional achievements consisted first and foremost of his contributions to the surgery of the gastrointestinal tract. He was the first to successfully remove the cancerous part of the stomach (1881) and a cancerous voice box (laryngotomy, 1874). He also discovered that streptococci and staphylococci cause wound infection. Billroth wrote on medical history and military surgery and nursing. One of his small monographs was much admired by the Russian Empress.

As builder of a modern surgical clinic and the Rudolphinum hospital in Vienna and member of the Austrian Parliament, he made a great contribution to public health and the overall organizational structure of medical care. Abraham Flexner based his organization of the university medical training system in the United States on his work, considering him the greatest surgical teacher of the nineteenth century.

In this first volume, Dr. Absolon traces Billroth's life from his origins in Pomerania through his school years in Goettingen, Greifswald and Berlin, and early career in Berlin and Zurich. His stint as accompanist to the famed soprano Jenny Lind only temporarily interfered with his career as a surgeon.

In the second and third volumes, presently in press, the author traces Billroth's activity as professor of surgery in Vienna from 1867 to his death in 1894. The cultural atmosphere, scientific and musical achievements of Central Europe and its political life form the background to the life story of his subjects. Each volume contains over 100 illustrations, some in color.

The reader puts aside this engaging portrait with the feeling that he has been privileged to gain an insight into the life story of an exceptional personality. The biography should prove a durable effort and should be of interest to surgeons, scientists, sociologists, and the general public interested in Europe. The name of Dr. Absolon will be forever linked with that of Dr. Billroth.

Summary of the preface to Vol. I by Prof. Dr. Med. et Phil. Erna Lesky, Director des Instituts fuer Geschichte der Medizin der Universitaet Wien, and of the foreword by Dr. Owen H. Wangensteen, Regents' Professor of Surgery, University of Minnesota.

By Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr.
Past President of SVU

*

SVU member Miroslav Velek, M.D., of the Albany Medical College, Department of Psychiatry, in collaboration with Paul Marks, of the Department of Music, McGill University, have prepared a study entitled "How Dark, O Lord, Are Thy Decrees. General Paresis as Reflected in the Lives and Work of Some Musicians." The authors have compiled data on the symptomatology of neurologic and psychiatric complications that may have affected certain famous composers, even though a definitive diagnosis is impossible in some cases.

Thus, they connect the strokes and blindness of Handel and progressive deafness of Beethoven, Robert Franz and Gabriel Faure with syphilis. Though other medical explanations have been offered, it has perhaps been out of a desire to spare their memories moral censure. In the authors' opinion Schubert died from acute luetic meningoencephalitis, despite the fact that "typhus" has traditionally been cited as the cause of his early death.

Other musicians mentioned in this study are Bedrich Smetana and Hugo

Wolf, who both died in mental asylums, and Frederick Delius, who was plagued by progressive blindness and a series of strokes.

A bibliography covers both the medical and musical aspects of this topic.

*

Stanislav Grof, M.D., chaired a panel on "Some New Paradigms for Psychoanalysis" at the 24th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis on May 1-4, 1980 in San Francisco. Dr Grof, a well-known expert on LSD, authored **Principles of LSD Psychotherapy** (Hunter House) and **Realms of the Human Unconscious. Observations from LSD Research** (New York: The Viking Press, 1975; 257 pp.) He did part of his research in Czechoslovakia and, after leaving his homeland, joined the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center. He currently lives in Big Sur, California.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Miloslav Rechcigl, senior nutrition advisor and chief of research of the Agency for International Development, participated last May in a visiting lecture series sponsored by the Harvard University School of Public Health. Dr. Rechcigl spoke on "The Challenge of World Hunger." Previous lectures in the series, "Perspectives in Tropical Health: The Background for Decision Analysis," included prominent leaders in the health sciences, from both the U.S. government and academic world and abroad.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

SVU member Jiri Valenta has made an important contribution to the understanding of Soviet decision making in his recent study **Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968. Anatomy of a decision** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979; 208 pp., \$12.95). The book has been favorably evaluated in **Foreign Affairs** (December, 1979) and in the **The New Leader** (January 1980.) The latter published a lengthy review by Vojtech Mastny, Professor of History at the University of Illinois and author of **Russia's Road to the Cold War**.

Valenta's well-researched book has become a required reading for officials in the U.S. government faced with the unpredictability of Soviet decision making. There are reasons to believe that former President Carter read it after the crises in Iran and Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan situation is another topic to which Jiri Valenta has applied his vast knowledge of what goes on behind Kremlin walls. He has published a detailed article in **The Sun** (Monterey, February 1980) and has lectured on it for the Los Angeles SVU Chapter (see the review in the **SVU Bulletin**, L.A. Chapter, Vol. XII, No. 3, July-September 1980).

To reach a consensus on the Czechoslovak situation in 1968 within the framework of the Soviet bureaucratic political system was, according to the author, a long and laborious process. Opinions of individual members of the Politburo had to be debated, pressures from domestic groups and non-Russian communist parties balanced, the unwillingness of Western powers to react carefully evaluated, and the pacific stance of the Czechoslovak reformers explored before the decision to intervene militarily on August 20, 1968 could be made. The unexpected occupation was then speedily and ruthlessly executed despite previous agreements at Cierna and Bratislava.

Dr. Valenta follows these deliberations and negotiations step by step, as far as his multiple sources allow him to lift the veil from internal Soviet politics. He is careful not to propound any formulas and clearly distinguishes between facts and hypotheses. One particularly provocative hypothesis is that SALT negotiations and U.S. election-year campaigns, which followed each other closely in both 1968 and 1980, played a significant role in the decision-making process.

We recommend the book for the wealth of generally unknown detail, the impressive bibliography, and the scholarly conceptualization of the main theses. The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia was reportedly considered "a big mistake" by Khrushchev. What other conclusions the Soviet decisionmakers have drawn from August 1968 remains to be seen. With the events in Poland Western Kremlinologists are undoubtedly turning to Valenta's book once again for guidance.

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Peter A. Toma, SVU Vice-President for 1981-82 and professor of Political Science at the University of Arizona, has recently published a political analysis of "The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia" in a symposium entitled *The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe*, edited by Stephen Fischer-Galati and copyrighted by Columbia University Press, 1979, pp. 86-165. This study encompasses the history, organization, policymaking and socialization of the indispensable instrument of political power in socialist Czechoslovakia. Professor Toma carefully delineates the role of the Czech and Slovak Communist Parties as instruments of the Czechoslovak political culture and the communist movement in an alliance subsystem. The book, which includes seven other communist parties of Eastern Europe, is available at bookstores and from Columbia University Press for \$20.00.

MUSIC

Smetana Day in Richmond, VA

Richmond, VA, the city of Edgar Allan Poe, is the home of the Smetana Trio: Landon Bilyen, pianist; Robert Murray, violinist; and Frantisek Smetana, cellist. Colleagues at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), they have been playing together for several years in various chamber music combinations. Frantisek Smetana, an SVU member, is the founder of the ensemble. Their latest performance of Haydn, Brahms and Piston drew such comments as "truly fine interpretation shifts attention away from the ensemble toward the composer" and "the better a musical group plays, the less there is to say about it." The cellist's warm and intensely musical tone has received special praise.

Frantisek Smetana (b. May 8, 1914) was schooled in Prague under Pravoslav Sadlo and in Paris under Andre Fournier, and has dedicated much of his artistic career to chamber music. He also conducts, teaches cello, and has to his credit a series of revisions of cello compositions by such Czech composers as Dvorak, Janacek, Novak, Martinu, etc. He taught at the Prague Conservatory of Music from 1946 to 1948. After the communist takeover he spent two years in prison, but was later allowed to resume his career under close supervision. He and his wife, Dolly Urbanek-Smetana (b. October 10, 1910 in Prague; d. July 28, 1980 in Richmond, VA), his pianist and steady

partner in duo performances, managed to escape from Czechoslovakia in 1964, finally settling in Richmond.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of his concert debut, at age 15, and to express appreciation for his musical activities in his new home, VCU declared April 8, 1979 "Frantisek Smetana Day" and saluted him as "an artist and a man who fought and suffered for the freedom."

EDUCATION

Marie Plodrova Dolansky was born in Vienna on November 1, 1920, of Czech parents. She became a certified teacher in the public school system in Czechoslovakia, then received a B.S. and M. ED. in 1949 and 1950, and a doctorate in education in 1952 from Boston University. Her doctoral dissertation dealt with "The Application of Information Theory to Test Item Weighing."

Her professional career embraces many fields of education, ranging from psychology to mathematics. In her early years in Boston she took over the directorship of the now defunct Czech private school. She has been on the faculties of Northeastern University and Middlesex Community College since the 1960's. In addition she served as school psychologist in the Belmont and Boston public schools and as a consultant on testing and measurement in the bilingual research project of the Boston public schools. She spent one year as a psychologist at the Clinic for Alcoholics at Northeastern University Hospital.

Her "Foundations of Mathematics" outlines a new mathematics course for Northeastern University, combining instruction in mathematical principles, their historical origins and their relation to politics, religion, music and the arts. Some of her other numerous publications are: "The Essential High School Content Battery as a Predictor of College Success," "Predicting Success in College," "Is Your Child Learning Czech and Why?" and "Lesson Plan for Teaching Basic Czech." Moreover, her active participating in SVU includes several papers presented at the biannual congresses, for example: "Women in Psychometrics and Statistics" in 1978 in Cleveland, and "Mental Depression, the Disease of Our Times" in 1980 in Washington, D.C.

For many years, Marie Dolansky has been one of the moving spirits of the Masaryk Club in Boston, where she served as President (1969-71), Vice-President (1971-72), and Program Chairman (1967-69). Like so many Czechs, she is also quite a linguist. Besides speaking fluent English, Czech and German, she can handle French, Swedish and Russian. She is an accomplished musician, and Czech organizations have often reaped the benefits of her piano and organ playing ability.

As if the above activities were not sufficient, she has a second profession as well. In 1972 she was certified as a handwriting expert by the International Graphoanalysis Society. She is quite in demand as a graphoanalyst; in her lectures she combines sophistication with a dash of humor. Particularly successful was her paper "Use of Graphoanalysis in the Selection of Aviation Technology Students" at the Chicago Congress of the International Graphoanalysis Society in July 1972.

Ms. Dolansky is the mother of two talented children, Vera and Jan, both college graduates, the former a civil engineer, the latter an electrical engineer. She makes her home in Framingham near Boston.

By Vera Laska
Regis College
Weston, Massachusetts

HUMAN RIGHTS

Since the Prague Spring — The Continuing Struggle for Human Rights in Czechoslovakia, edited by Hans-Peter Riese and translated from German by Eugen Loebel; Foreword by Henry Miller. New York: Vintage/Random, 1979; pp. 208, \$4.95.

In the celebrated Charter 77 and a number of subsequent documents, a group of loyal citizens have requested that the Czechoslovak Government live up to the obligations it entered into when on October 13, 1976 it passed Law 120, incorporating the principles of the "International Agreement on Civil and Political Rights" (Helsinki Agreement) into its legal code.

This book is a collection of well-documented protests against violations of human rights. The bulk of the material was written by people who have been prevented from working in the professions they were trained for, solely because their political views deviate from the official line. They are victims of the "new apartheid." Accompanied only by an eloquent foreword by Henry Miller and laconic introductions to individual chapters by the editor, the documents speak for themselves.

One of the most fascinating documents is the index of 617 citizens who publicly came out in favor of Charter 77. Going through the list, I thought of the signers of the U.S Declaration of Independence and the chances they took affixing their names to a seditious document. Much has been written about those courageous individuals, while, unfortunately, little information is as yet available about the individuals who signed Charter 77. A systematic analysis of the social, educational and occupational background of the signatories of Charter 77 — perhaps in the form of a Ph.D. dissertation in one of the behavioral sciences — might provide an insight into the sources of these Czechoslovak patriots' exemplary courage. This sort of knowledge might well be incorporated into a tool kit of strategies for implementing the Helsinki International Agreements on Human Rights.

In my interpretation of the documents, the dissidents do not speak in favor of any Western democratic ideology, as the media this side of the Iron Curtain would have us believe. On the contrary, they are evolutionaries aiming at putting a more "human face" on the socialistic system which has been established in Czechoslovakia over the last three decades. To interpret Charter 77 otherwise is doing grave disservice to the cause of human rights.

In short, this valuable little volume should be on the book shelves of lovers of freedom everywhere.

Reprints of the whole review can be obtained from the reviewer,
Frank Meissner, past SVU Treasurer.

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