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BULLETIN

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August, 1985

SVU Activities

PREPARATIONS FOR THE THIRTEENTH WORLD CONGRESS

September 18-20, 1986

Northeastern University, CIHED
Boston Massachusetts

Ladislav Dolansky, Professor of Electrical Engineering, Northeastern University, who organized the Intercongress in Boston in 1983, accepted the responsibility for all local arrangements for the Thirteenth World Congress taking place in September 1986. The Center for International Higher Education Documentation (CIHED) consented to host the congress. Dr. Dolansky has found willing co-workers to form a local committee, distributing among themselves the numerous tasks which are the basis for any successful scientific meeting of an organization like SVU.

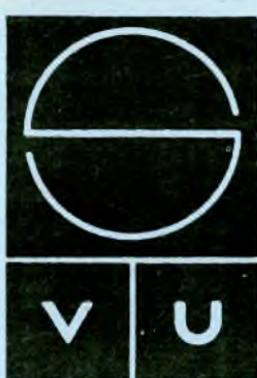
SVU Vice-Presidents Igor Nabelek (University of Tennessee) and Emil Purgina (University of Ottawa) are in charge, respectively, of the academic and the artistic program. They will soon send out invitations to potential participants. The deadline for mailing the abstracts of proposed papers has been already established: January 6, 1986, to ensure their early printing.

Exhibitions of Czechoslovak stamps, books and of art works, a concert and film shows, the customary banquet and other activities are planned. The information about housing will be soon forthcoming.

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European Conference in Switzerland

During the days of August 16-18, 1985, local and overseas SVU members congregated in Thun to participate in the program organized by the Swiss SVU Chapter. The main topic of the conference was **The Threatened Heritage of Central Europe**. It also was a



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program commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the end of WWII.

The inaugural session in the evening of Friday, August 16, was dedicated to "Forty Years after Yalta." P. Gosztony from Bern spoke on "Between Tehran and Yalta" and Ivan Svitak from California chose the title "Alea Yalta est" for his paper.

Next day, three speakers participated in the morning session, "The Changes in Central European Structures": Jiri Nehnevajsa (Pittsburgh) commented on "Four Decades of the World Development," J. Karpinsky (London) spoke on "The Dynamics of Central Europe," and Ladislav Matejka (Ann Arbor) on "Cultural Isoglosses of Central Europe."

The afternoon session consisted of Antonin Mestan's (Freiburg in Br.) "The Problems of the Central European Space in the Literatures of Central Europe after WWII," B. Cywinski's (Fribourg) "The Roots of the Solidarity Ideas -- a Guidepost for Central Europe?" and J. Vladislav's (Paris) "The Struggle for Cultural Identity of Central Europe."

In the Sunday morning session, Lubomir Durovic (Lund) lectured on "The Cultural-Historical Prerequisites of the 'Normalization'," A. Reszler (Geneva) on "The Cultural Heritage of Central Europe: What Can be saved?" and Jaroslav Krejci (Lancaster) on "Central European Interrelations and Perspectives."

A General Assembly, meetings of the Executive Board, a banquet and other opportunities for getting to know the European SVU members and friends took place, in the beautiful environment of the Lake Thun.

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RESPONSE FROM THE NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

As we reported in *Bulletin V/3*, three Czechoslovak writers were awarded honorary membership in the society during the SVU Twelfth World Congress held in October 1984 in Toronto. We have here their answers.

Jaroslav Seifert, Nobel Prize Laureate, wrote from Prague:

I thank you for the recognition your Society gave me by awarding me the honorary membership. I accept it gladly even though I recognize, with certain regret, that I will not be able to participate in any way in your activities. Nevertheless, I wish you much success, as I do to all those who try to do something in favor of the Czechoslovak culture and Czechoslovakia in general.

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Vaclav Havel commented:

I greatly appreciate this honor because I know what important work SVU does and how many outstanding personalities from different areas of intellectual activities it unites. I will try not to fall short of the trust implied in this honor. . .

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And from Paris came these words of Milan Kundera:

The award of the honorary membership in your Society made me very happy. I am grateful and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

K O S M A S

Journal of Czechoslovak and Central European Studies

Vol. III, No. 2/Vol. IV, No. 1
(Double Issue)

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Společnost pro vědy a umění Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences

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July 5, 1985

Dear Kosmas Subscriber:

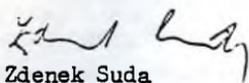
we believe we owe you an explanation and an apology because of the irregularities in the distribution of our journal.

For a number of reasons, a considerable delay developed in the delivery of our publication, which could not be easily overcome. It was connected with the change in the office of the Editor-in-Chief and with the assuming of the editorial responsibilities by the new incumbent, that did not happen as smoothly as we would have wished. Nevertheless, we have now reached the point where regular appearance of Kosmas can again be reasonably expected. This is good news and we hurry to share it with you.

Thus the 1st number of the 3rd volume, originally scheduled for Summer 1984, will be distributed no later than August 15, this year. The next following issue - actually a double issue containing highly interesting, as yet unpublished material from Czechoslovakia - is already in print and should reach you by October 15, this year. It will be closely followed by yet another issue which you should receive by December 31. The double issue will replace the Winter 1984 and Summer 1985 numbers; the issue you will get in December, the 2nd number of the 4th volume, will thus be back on schedule. The subsequent issues will rigorously observe the regular deadlines, which means that the 1st number of the 5th volume (Summer 1986) will be delivered to you on or before August 1, 1986.

We hope that you have been aware of our continuing efforts to improve the quality of Kosmas, and that you have noticed the results of these efforts. It is our intention to publish a periodical of top quality, both from the scientific and formal point of view, a periodical that will successfully fill the existing gap in the line of publications dealing with Czechoslovak and Central European culture. We trust that you will remain firm supporters of our journal and that you will also recommend it to potential subscribers in your neighborhood, your workplace, or in the circle of your friends. Thank you for your patience and your loyalty.

For the Editorial Board:


Zdenek Suda
Editor-in-Chief

A NOTE ON EXCELLENCE

Jiri Nehnevajsa

Nothing stands to elevate the human soul and enrich social wellbeing more than persistent striving for excellence in all that we seek to do.

The midwives at the cradle of excellence are integrity, competence, hard work, willingness to take prudent chances and, yes, a bit of good luck as well.

Integrity has its roots in moral stamina; in a deep sense of valuing that which is of lasting value; in courage and self-confidence; in ingrained honesty. And, indeed, in loyalty. Competence, in turn, while it may rest on the foundations of talent is an outcome of not merely ability but of both desire and willingness to learn and of unceasing desire to keep learning.

Hard work is not simply an expression of manifestation of mental as well as physical health, but a strategic by-product of commitment and dedication.

A creative style of risk philosophy, the willingness to take sensible chances, is driven by the recognition that the future continues to be uncertain, but that it is worthwhile and possible to try to make it ever more to our liking rather than to accept being only victims of the implacable flow of todays and tomorrows or even remain enchained in remembrances of the past. The capacity to recognize and seize opportunities is yet another central ingredient.

And what of "good luck"? For the most part, though far from always, it seems to bless those who truly seek excellence to begin with - and this is, perhaps, as it should be.

Not infrequently, I am asked by students and occasionally by others about the very meaning and purpose of life.

My answer to such queries of ultimate complexity may be far from a perfect or complete one, but I do find it to be a worthwhile one to consider.

Life is giving meaning and purpose through conscious efforts to become, and be, the very best each of us can become and be; to fulfill as best possible the potential that each of us represents; and to keep expanding that potential so that we are always reaching well beyond where we already may be. And it is, by the same token, an all-out effort to create an interpersonal and social environment in which this search for excellence is made possible, and facilitated, for all other human beings.

Thus I suggest that the quest for excellence stands at the very foundation of life's quality, meaning and purpose.

Per aspera ad astra.

In our Society, the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, it *is*, it *should be*, and it *must be* among our loftiest objectives to aspire to excellence in all our endeavors both as a Society and as individuals, to nourish and foster excellence no matter what tides of mediocrity may seem to engulf us at any given time.

These brief remarks constitute the central theme of a presentation at the April 13, 1985 reception of the Washington, D.C., Chapter of SVU, presided by Pavel Pechacek, with Tomas Jan Bata as the main speaker.



Personalia

Libuse Zorin - New Editor of Zpravy

Libuse Zorin, born in Vitkov, studied at a technical school in Opava and then at Charles University in Prague (1961-1966), specializing in Czech and Russian languages. After leaving Czechoslovakia she settled in New York in 1969. She earned a Master's degree in Library Science from the Queens College in 1977 and has been employed as a librarian at the U.S. Library of Congress in the capital.

Ms. Zorin's book **Soviet Prisons and Concentration Camps. Annotated Bibliography, 1917-1980**, was published in 1980. Currently she is working on Czech and Slovak exile publications for **Abstracts of Soviet and East-European Periodical Literature**. More than a hundred of her articles have appeared since 1953.

We wish her much satisfaction in her new task of editing the bimonthly **SVU Zpravy** for the society.



Cestmir Jesina - SVU Vice-President

The special area of the SVU agenda, of which the Vice-President Cestmir Jesina is in charge, is the contact with the local chapters. In view of the fact that SVU members are spread all over the Western world, his effort of establishing a viable communication net with the sixteen local chapters that are currently active deserves the support of all.

Cestmir Jesina was born in Rapotice and after the war studied in Brno. He was very active in the democratic student and youth movements and had to escape from Czechoslovakia at the end of 1948. He studied political science and economics at Oxford (M.A. 1958) during his stay in Great Britain, spent some years in West Germany and continued his studies after the immigration in the United States, earning a doctorate at the George Washington University in 1970.

Dr. Jesina has worked in various capacities in the Cost of Living Council and then in the Department of Energy. He coauthored, in 1968, the pioneering study **The Soviet Financial System and The Role of Foreign Governments in the Energy Industries** which was published in 1977. He is the author of **The Birth of Czechoslovakia** and of numerous articles concerning Czechoslovak history, as well as of other studies in political and social theories. He has been actively involved in SVU since the foundation of the Society.



J. W Bruegel - 80

Johann Wolfgang Bruegel, a judges's son, was born on July 3, 1905 in Hustopece, Moravia, and grew up in Brno. He earned his degree of Doctor of Law at the Prague German University in 1928. Between 1930 and 1938 he was the private secretary of Dr. Ludwig Czech (1870-1942). He held that position while Dr. Czech, a Brno attorney and the leading member of the German Social Democrats in the Czechoslovak Republic, was appointed Minister of Social Welfare (1930-34), Minister of Public Works (1934-35) and Minister of Health (1935-38), after which he transferred back to the Ministry of Social Welfare in another capacity (1938-39) before he was deported to Terezin where he soon died.

When the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia, Dr. Bruegel left and lived in Paris since April 1939, becoming an officer of the Czechoslovak National Committee functioning in that city until May 1940. By July 1940 he was in London, working in the Ministry of Economic Reconstruction (1942-45) of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile. He was called to Prague in May 1945 to assume a post at the Ministry of Industry.

He returned to London for good in November 1946 and became an independent free-lance writer, translator, interpreter and broadcaster. His journalistic activities started in 1924 when he regularly contributed to the German Social Democrats press in his native country which led to his working as a London correspondent of the continental newspapers. He is the author of many essays on modern history and international law.

J. W. Bruegel has been an early member of SVU, frequently contributing to the Society's periodicals and participating in SVU congresses. In the past congresses he spoke on a variety of issues he has personally witnessed and thoroughly researched, such as: "Foreign Relations between Germany and Czechoslovakia, 1918-1926"; "The German Political Parties in Czechoslovakia 1918-1938"; "Did the Soviet Union Want to Fight for Czechoslovakia in 1938?"; "Did the Great Powers Agree to the Transfer of the Sudeten Germans?"; "The Project for a French-Czechoslovak Treaty 1946/1947"; "Dr. Benes on his Position after February 1948"; "The Diaries of Camill Hoffman"; and for the last congress in Toronto he prepared the paper "The Recognition of 'Lublin' by the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile, 1944-45" which will be published in a Czech translation in *Promeny*. His article "The Recognition of the Czechoslovak Government in London" appeared in *Kosmas*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (1983).

For the second volume of *The Jews of Czechoslovakia* (1971) he wrote the chapter "Jews in Political Life." In that essay he mentioned, among many well-known public personalities, his former "boss," whose life and work he presented in the book *Ludwig Czech, Arbeiterfuehrer und Staatsman* (Vienna, 1960).

Dr. Bruegel also is the author of the following books: *Tschechen und Deutsche 1918-1938* (Munich, 1967) which came out in an expanded English edition as *Czechoslovakia before Munich. The German Minority Problem and British Appeasement Policy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973). The second part of *Tschechen und Deutsche 1939-46* was published in Munich in 1974.

For his life-long work, Dr. Bruegel was awarded, in 1976, the title of Professor by Dr. R. Kirchsclaeger, Federal President of Austria.

What's Your Thing?

Here is the continuation of "our things" for your interest. We plan to enlarge this section in terms of both categories and information. The Secretary, all officers of the Society and the editor 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.

MEMORIES OF WWII

A chapter of Czechoslovak history that does not seem to have been sufficiently presented in English sources is the one on the systematic suppression and destruction of the democratic, antifascist intelligentsia that resisted the Nazis after March 15, 1939. We run across histories of persecution, imprisonments and survival in individual biographies or remember execution and death in various concentration camps of prominent personalities in historically oriented writings, but a more comprehensive compilation of such data, updated and evaluated, is not easily found today.* Yet, the Nazi attempt to deliberately annihilate the leading intellectuals of Masaryk's republic is an intrinsic part of the Holocaust history.

There are still eyewitnesses of that era whose knowledge needs to be preserved. Strict objectivity would be necessary to correct the widespread distortions of facts that have ideological background for accepting only some of the 1939-1945 resistance as being "the right kind" and devaluating other aspects of it, especially after February 1948.

Milos Vitek from Montreal has been writing about some of these issues in **Promeny, Zpravy SVU** and other Czech periodicals, e.g., in **Kanadske Listy** published in Toronto. He was born in Brno in 1912, studied in Grenoble and Paris (1932-33) and finished his university studies at Masaryk University with the degree of Doctor of Law in 1938. Instead of being allowed to freely pursue his profession, he was assigned by the Protectorate labor authority to a wool factory. By that time the universities in Bohemia and Moravia were permanently closed. Many of the students and their dismissed professors, wherever they had to work, organized underground resistance groups. Dr. Vitek became one of the resisters and the Gestapo arrested him in the factory at the end of 1941. He was jailed with many of his university friends, and they were sent together as a group to the "labor camp" Mauthausen, located in Austria. Some were shot or beaten to death immediately, others died later of illnesses or physical brutality. To achieve the aim of "return undesirable," their SS trained guards "worked the prisoners to death" or declared them "incurable" to make them subject to "euthanasia." The Czechs, according to Vitek, were receiving the most inhumane treatment, the same as the Jews, especially at the time when the "Protector" Heydrich was assassinated near Prague. Mauthausen, at the time of liberation by General Patton's Third Army, housed 64,000 men, of whom 2,000 were from Czechoslovakia.

However, Vitek and one surviving friend from the original Brno group, were transferred, in November 1942, to Dachau where he stayed until the liberation by the Seventh American Army on Sunday, April 29, 1945. Among his fellow prisoners in Dachau were, e.g., the future Czech Archbishop Josef Beran, several other Czech priests, a German participant in an attempt on Hitler's life, and many other unforgettable personalities. The oldest Czech prisoner was Karel Feierabend (b. 1861), father of Ladislav Feierabend (see below); three more members of the Feierabend family also were in Dachau.

After his return to Czechoslovakia, Dr. Vitek published, in 1946, a book about his imprisonment, was awarded several honors for his activities and was involved in the organizations of the victims of Nazism and in the investigation of Nazi crimes. He left Czechoslovakia in 1950, and since 1951 has lived in Canada, having to start as a worker in a factory manufacturing wooden products. He developed some new techniques and eventually built up his own, very successful company. He also found time to write many articles on Czech music, theater and literature.

This spring he went to Europe to meet with other former Dachau prisoners, to remember the years they spent in the camp and to relive the liberation, although many of their friends have died since 1945. They met in Dachau and later in Paris where the organization "Amicale des Anciens de Dachau" unveiled a monument to the victims of Dachau at the cemetery Pere Lachaise.

For those who want to read the Czech articles of Dr. Vitek, we give the references for the longer essays: **Promeny** II/1 (Mauthausen 1942); II/3, 4-12/1-13/2 (1974, Year of Czech Music); 12/2 (End of My Dachau Diary); 20/2 (Profiles of the Professors of Masaryk University who died in 1942 in Mauthausen).

*A recent article by the writer Ota Filip, titled "Totenfeier" (**Die Zeit**, No. 30, July 26, 1985), alludes to a similar situation in West Germany. He mentions Czechoslovak authors who courageously commented on the Nazi occupation and those who wrote about the Holocaust. Their works are mostly unknown in Germany and only very few have been translated. As an example he indicates the interest in Jaroslav Seifert's poetry, with exception of his WWII collections, such as **Zhasnete svetla** (Put out the Lights, 1938) and **Prilba hliny** (Earth-filled Helmet, 1945) or the post-war books by Norbert Fryd. This article is one of the series on "Literature of our neighbors" published by the newspaper on the occasion of the end of WWII,

★ ★ ★

Jan Filipek, *The Shadow of the Gallows*

(Palm Springs, CA: Palm Springs Publishing Co., 1985; 316 pp., illustrations; \$8.95, paper)

Jan Filipek published the shorter Czech version of his WWII true story in 1982. The revised and enlarged English translation has recently appeared, titled *The Shadow of the Gallows*. The book is dedicated to the memory of nineteen Czechoslovak patriots "who sacrificed their lives on the field of Glory for the cause of freedom and the dignity of man." We meet them one by one in the course of the story. Photos of several of them and of other persons mentioned in the book are included. A few biographies of important Czechoslovak political figures are developed in Appendix I. Among them is Ladislav Feierabend (1891-1969), Doctor of Law, Minister of Agriculture since October 1938 and an active member of the Czechoslovak resistance against the Nazis, whose escape to England in order to join the Government-in-Exile, is the starting point of Jan Filipek's story.

Filipek, a young man in his mid-twenties, had worked in Prague as the personal secretary of Ladislav Feierabend in the *Kooperativa* (Central Union of Warehouse Cooperatives). The professional contact and personal friendship continued when Filipek's boss was appointed the Minister. To his surprise, the Minister suddenly asked him in January 1940 to help him find an illegal way of leaving the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, for the Gestapo learned about his underground activities. Step by step, several actors of this drama are described. The Minister's "disappearance" was accomplished without a hitch, but the persons who accompanied him to Slovakia, from where he reached Yugoslavia, his family members and his co-workers expected some repercussions from the Gestapo.

Filipek got summons to appear at the Gestapo headquarters in January 1941, was interrogated and released. A month later he got another subpoena and that time he was arrested and sent to the Pankrac jail. Many interrogations, interspersed by some severe beatings, and confrontations with the evidence of the others who were also arrested, followed, while the Gestapo were building their case.

Meanwhile, Filipek gradually formulated for himself the basic tenets of denying being a member of any politically motivated conspiracy, claiming ignorance of his superior's intentions, maintaining his innocence, not implicating anybody else and not giving up. He came up with a very original line of defense which he called "the Trojan horse." He just kept saying that he, truly and absolutely, believed Dr. Feierabend had been sent to England on some special very secret mission by the top Nazis. When pushed, he conceded that he vaguely heard about it from a friend, who died shortly before from tuberculosis and thus was out of the reach of the Gestapo as a witness. The defense was farfetched enough to be impossible to be checked out and disproved.

He and all the other prisoners implicated in the Feierabend case were transported to Berlin for a trial before the People's Court. The *Reich* jails, Stadelheim and later Alt Moabit, were in some respect less harrowing than the Gestapo-ruled Pankrac jail, and Filipek studied English and French to keep up his morale. He also mentally rehearsed his defense, finding innocuous interpretations for any details he could be accused of, in order of making them fit his audacious, all-or-nothing, theory. He also tried some of

his ideas on his, more or less *pro-forma* defense counsel. After he received a copy of his indictment, he memorized the data, his well thought out answers -- all having to be in German -- and gave a lot of thought to his tone of voice and body language, to be ready for the trial starting on June 15, 1942.

All the accused were found guilty. Eleven men and one woman were sentenced to death and were executed in November 1942. Filipek and another man were given ten years of imprisonment, and two got shorter sentences. From Berlin, Filipek was transferred to several prisons in Silesia, until the end of the war. Only in 1955 he got his sentence officially annulled by the German authorities; a copy of the interestingly formulated document is reproduced in the book.

Between May 1945 and February 1948, Dr. Feierabend lived in retirement in Czechoslovakia and then left for his second emigration. Filipek also left and spent some time in the DP camps in Germany. After living for several years in Australia, he eventually came to this country and made Palm Springs his home.

It is necessary to read the book to get the picture of the interwoven actions and roles each accused performed in the Feierabend case. Filipek wrote down the details in 1945 when they were fresh in his memory but found time for the book much later. His descriptions of the Gestapo interrogators, the People's Court Nazi judge and of the jails/prisons he was in are very accurate and vivid. He writes with affection and deeply felt regret about his co-conspirators whom he survived. He is open about his thoughts and feelings during all that trying period. He evokes the stressful conditions to which a prisoner had to adjust and does not deny that they affected him in some ways for the rest of his life. There seems to be some underlying sadness about having been caught into such historical events and about having to exert all his courage and stamina against a brutal enemy.

Jan Filipek's book is a very personal story but also an important document of one of the tragic periods of Czechoslovakia. Some of the sadness may be coming from the fact that such events as those he went through did not end with the fall of the Nazism, that other young men and women are today fighting under the shadow of many gallows against injustices, totalitarian willfulness and man's inhumanity. Although life goes on and it is right to reconstruct one's life to the fullest, some sense of futility lingers. Appendix II of the book can be an example.

When Mr. Filipek visited his family in Czechoslovakia for the first time after twenty years, his planned last day was August 21, 1968 -- the date that entered in history as "the day Russians came to Prague." Older and wiser, he made it to the frontier from Prague in a taxi, and with his American passport was allowed to cross it -- again into Germany. What else can we add?

The book reads well and deserves attention of many readers interested in understanding and remembering the period of WWII in Central Europe. The only criticism concerns the short footnote on page 12, which forgot to mention Subcarpathian Ruthenia as a part of the pre-Munich Czechoslovak Republic.

The book can be ordered from: Palm Springs Publishing Company
277 South Palm Canyon Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262

★ ★ ★

LEARNING ABOUT CZECHOSLOVAK ROOTS

It looks like the idea of organizing the SVU Juniors (see **Bulletin VI/1**) came at just the right moment. The Washington, D.C., members seem to be enthusiastic and have begun to formulate some of their goals, the main one being to learn more about their cultural heritage. Reportedly, a group of SVU Juniors has also started to organize in Vienna, Austria. As the Czechoslovak intellectuals have traditionally been bookish people, we will occasionally bring information about publications that could be of general interest to anybody searching for their Czechoslovak roots through reading.

Patricia Hampl, **A Romantic Education**

(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981; 308 pp, \$7.95 paper)

This autobiographical book was awarded a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship for its unusual contents and stylistic power. The author was born in St. Paul after WWII, grew up in the 1960's, and currently teaches at the University of Minnesota. She published two volumes of poetry prior to this prose.

The title does not give any indication that the "romantic" element in her life has been her family background, *i.e.*, her Czech (or rather Bohemian) paternal grandparents. The very beginning of the book introduces "babicka," the grandmother whose "foreignness" fascinated Patricia since her childhood into her young adulthood.

In the first half of the book several strands of memories intertwine. First of all, there was the city of St. Paul itself where the Hampl family settled. The author calls them a "nostalgic" family, prone to reminisce about WWI, the depression and WWII. Her Czech-American father, a florist, married an Irish girl, making Patricia "half Irish and half Czech" which she found an uncomfortable identity and one reason why she often felt alienated from her environment. The descriptions of "babicka's" elaborate, ritual Sunday noon dinners (nedelni obedy), of her vegetable garden and her emotionality are very affectionate and fitting. Granny's unselfconscious acceptance of herself and of life made her the matriarchal hub of the family and an intriguing challenge to her "American" granddaughter, striving for education and intellectual growth.

Patricia's struggle of finding "what" she was, is another important strand of this narration. After attending the Catholic parochial schools she went to college, graduating in English studies. She introspectively writes about her "addiction to beauty," besides having to come to terms with the feminism, anti-Vietnam demonstrations and other complex social and intellectual issues of the sixties. She decided early in her life that she wanted to become a writer. Her first job in 1968 was at a newspaper -- and there she experienced the shock of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Living away from the family she was getting the news of her grandmother's gradual decline only through letters. She did not go home for the funeral when "babicka" died at the age of 90 -- and suffered a strong, delayed grief and guilt reaction. "Then," she writes, "our personal Europe dead and buried, I decided I must go there."

After this declaration, the second half of the book is dedicated to her two trips to Czechoslovakia. She went to Prague (the *Zlata Praha* she knew from babicka's picture book) for the first time in May 1975. She returned for another visit two years later. Between the two trips she halfheartedly took some Czech lessons and, with more profit, read extensively on Czechoslovakia.

It would be unfair to reveal her impressions. Ms. Hampl writes in a way that cannot be summarized in a few sentences. She found much beauty, met some strange people and gained insight into many historical, literary, artistic and contemporary aspects of the life in Czechoslovakia. As grandmother did not remember the name of her native village, Patricia did not have any intention of trying to find it and was free to collect impressions for future memories as they came. One of her conclusions about the country of her ancestors was that "it is the 'heart of Europe'; it is the sadness of the continent." Prague's beauty made a strong impact on her but she knew "there is no way for an ordinary American to live" in that city. The book, in part a family saga and in part the individual account of a third generation American woman's search for personal identity is worth reading.

To keep in style, the book "was set in Linotype Fairfield, a typeface designed by Czechoslovakian-born artist, engraver, and book designer Rudolph Ruzicka." It may also be of interest that the picture on the front cover of the Hampl book is the same one as on Claire Sterling's *The Masaryk Case* (Boston, Godine, Nonpareil books, 1982).

Available from:

Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston, MA 02108



Vladimir and DeLores Kucera, Eds., Treasures of the Czech Culture, (1984, 377 pp; \$16.95)

Vladimir Kucera was born in 1906 in Brno and earned his degree of Doctor of Law at Masaryk University in 1945. He left Czechoslovakia after February 1948 and settled in Lincoln, teaching at the University of Nebraska. Journalism, languages and literature have been his special interests.

He came to love the Great Prairie state but did not forget his old Moravian home. During the past thirty years he kept collecting materials on Czech culture which he now self-published under the title **Treasures of the Czech Culture**. His previous book was dedicated to **Czech Folklore**. His wife deLores has been actively involved in his Czech-oriented endeavors, especially where music and arts were concerned. A group of friends from Nebraska contributed pictures and other data, besides having certain articles included in the book.

The author-compiler explicitly states that he did not want to write in a "high style." His intention was to acquaint his readers with a great amount of information, approximately corresponding to the basic knowledge a well educated Czech would have acquired during his or her studies. Some additional chapters, make reference to the ethnic life of the Nebraska Czechs. Unfortunately, the presentation is uneven which is a pity. A thorough revision and a very careful proofreading would enhance the book's value and do justice to the author's laudable intention.

As the title indicates, the book is dedicated to the cultural achievements and developments within the Czech Lands, *i.e.*, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. There are only a few references to Slovakia. It is a reader, mostly following chronological order in each section. It starts with "The Great Migration of the Slavs," continues with the "Mythical Period of the Czech History" and "Beginnings of the Christianity in the Great Moravian Empire." The merits and historical importance of St. Wenceslas, Charles IV, John Hus, Comenius and some others are mentioned for the older historical periods, while a "Gallery of the Prominent Czechs" starts with Thomas Garrigue Masaryk and includes some important personalities among the older Czech Americans and the recent exiles.

A "Brief History of Czech Literature" (pp. 78-156) is mostly biographical; the chapter "Precious Jewels of the Czech Literature" (pp. 165-284) is then a substantial selection of Czech poetry, from Bezruc to Zeyer, offering the Czech version and an English translation of each poem. Czech drama, folklore and music have shorter chapters. Additional information concerns sports, "Heritage Treasures" and "The National Jewel" (the Bohemian garnet). One section is not translated for it is a traditional wedding ceremony in a Moravian-Slovakian dialect, presented by the folklorist Steve Prikazsky. A list of the sovereigns (pp. 367-368) ruling in the Czech lands gives the dates of all of them, beginning with Samo of the Great Moravian Empire and ending with Gustav Husak.

All illustrative material is very interesting and many data compiled in this publication are not easily available. An index would be helpful for easier reference.

Order from: Vladimir Kucera, 2511 N 46th St, Lincoln, NE 68504.



FOLK TALES

Karel Absolon, Moravian Tales ★ Legends ★ Myths

(Rockville, MD: Kabel Publishers, Series I, 1984; Series II, 1985)

Folk tales are an essential part of any ethnic heritage. One usually gets acquainted with some of them very early in life, before being able to read them in school books. In the exile, some parents and grandparents tell them to their kids, perhaps in the language of the country where they live. Yet, such narrations do not often see print.

One of the SVU members, Karel B. Absolon, M.D., started to publish a series of Moravian tales, legends and myths which had been told to him in his family and which he transmitted to his children and friends. The choice of the locality has to do with his interest in the Moravian Karst -- specifically the Macocha Abyss which had been discovered by his father -- and in similar natural phenomena in this country. His work as a surgeon with Westworld Community Health Care Inc. has recently taken him to the Black Hills in South Dakota which strongly reminded him of the Moravian caves and underground rivers. The Westworld corporation provides rural medical care but also promotes cultural activities and sponsors scholarly publications.

Series I offers "Cave Stories: Macocha Abyss and Punkva Sinking River"; Series II has two stories: "The Phantom of Devil's Bridge" and "The Tale of Buffalo Castle." Each volume is a bibliophile, numbered edition and costs \$16.00.

Taking "The Phantom of Devil's Bridge" as an example of Dr. Absolon's story telling style, it has the cruel Knight Guntram who terrorized the peasantry; Jura, the good son of a poor widow; an old village witch; the Knight's kind but frightened wife. When Jura kills a deer to provide meat for his sick mother, he is caught and ordered by the Knight to bring him the eaglets from a nest sitting on the rock formation called the Devil's Bridge where nobody ever dared to go. Will Jura, following the advice of the witch, overcome all the dangers and return alive? Will the evil Knight's power be broken? Well, we can't tell you that here. And we also cannot reveal what "The Buffalo Castle" is about. It is a very old story and there is some connection with the Pernstejn Castle, famous for its ghost... It is a part of any story telling to keep up the suspense.

A non-fiction book, **The Conquest of Underground Rivers** (Coconut Grove, FL: Field Research Projects, 1984; 150 pp, 60 illustrations), is Dr. Absolon's historical and technical study of the explorations of the Macocha region, of interest for all speleologists and active spelunkers.

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...AND MEDICINE

In his professional field, Karel Absolon has recently produced the book **Developmental Technology of Gastric Surgery (1521 to 1984)** (Rockville, MD: Kabel Publishers, 1984; 160 pp, 250 illustrations, 15 tables; \$42.50) which is reviewed in *Kosmas* III,1 by Stacey B. Day. The same reviewer's essays analyzing Absolon's prior large work, **The Surgeon's Surgeon: Theodor Billroth 1829-1894** (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, Vol. I 1979; Vol. II 1981; Vol. III and IV in press) appeared in *Kosmas* I,1 and I,2. The first volume was also reviewed by Miloslav Rechcigl in *Bulletin* II,1.

A companion book, **The Intimate Billroth** (Rockville, MD: Kabel, 1985; 150 pp, 25 illustrations, 11 tables; \$40.00) came out in an English and German edition. It is a selection of Billroth's so far unpublished letters.

★

Besides all his surgical and literary activities, Karel Absolon, past SVU Vice-president, has become the director of Kabel Publishers, dedicated to "scholarly publications from different cultural areas," in small, numbered editions. So far typesetting in English and German is available. The turnover for Kabel is approximately six to nine months, which means the publications come out without the delays of large publishing houses. Each publication receives an ISBN number, copyright and a Library of Congress number. Arrangements to republish can be made by commercial publishers by contacting Kabel. The author is paid an honorarium of 15% of the gross after 50 books are sold and 30% after 100 books.

Anybody seeking more information should send a summary and a short sample from the manuscript to: Kabel Publishers

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★★★

ASTRONOMY

We will undoubtedly hear more news about Halley's comet as its course will be watched by all nations until next spring. The famous comet, returning every 76 years, was last seen in 1910. This time, several space probing crafts will observe it, and it is hoped that many new data about this stellar phenomenon will be gathered. One of the already launched probes has been named after the 14th century painter Giotto who saw the comet and painted it as the Star of Bethlehem into his "The Adoration of the Magi." The modern Giotto will pass through the tail of the comet and take pictures of its small nucleus. The comets have always fascinated people whenever one has passed close to the Earth. Today's technology can study it as never before.

All astronomers naturally look forward to Halley's comet's once-in-a-lifetime appearance. Karel Hujer, Guerry Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and Physics, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Director of the Jones Observatory and member of several international astronomical societies, recently published an interesting article in **The Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada** (Vol. 77, No. 6, 1983), "On the History of Wilhelm von Biela and His Comet."

The astronomer von Biela (1782-1856) was a descendant from a Protestant Bohemian family that went into exile after Frederick of Bila was executed in Prague in 1621, after the White Mountain battle. Wilhelm von Biela, born in Saxony, had a military career and then studied astronomy at Charles University in Prague. There he discovered a comet in 1826 and studied it, identifying it with other previously sighted comets and calculating correctly its reappearances. This Biela comet became an object of special interest when it broke in 1846 and eventually produced "a most spectacular meteor shower" in 1872, the study of which Dr. Hujer characterizes as "another milestone in the advancement of cosmology."

Karel Hujer was born in Zelezný Brod in 1902 and graduated from Charles University in 1932 with a doctorate in astrophysics and philosophy of science. His spiritual development was influenced by his interest in Petr Chelcicky's pacifism and by a close association with the poet-philosopher Rabindranath Tagore. In his current retirement he continues to write on astronomy, human rights and other cultural topics. He has participated in numerous international congresses, lecturing on Kepler, Galileo, Biela, the research of the Czech astronomer Kohoutek and many more. He may even remember the Halley's comet of 1910, at that time expected with much apprehension and superstition. Dr. Hujer has contributed many articles to SVU periodicals, since the early days of the Society.



While the scientists anticipate new knowledge, a poet encountering a comet is free to use any subjective and imaginative thoughts. Jaroslav Seifert published a collection of poems **Chlapec a hvězdy** (The Boy and the Stars) in 1956 and another one in 1967, titled **Halleyova kometa** (Halley's Comet). We reprint an English version of one poem from the latter collection which was published in **Exhibition Notes** (1985) of the British Library. The translator, David Short, lectures at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London.

From *Halleyova kometa* (1967)

HALLEY'S COMET

In that instant I saw nothing,
 just the backs of strangers,
but the heads beneath the hats gave a sudden start.
The street was full.

I would rather have dragged myself up by my fingers
onto a bare wall,
 as ether-drinkers try to do,
but just then my hand was seized by
 a woman's hand,
I took a few steps forward
and before me opened up the chasms
which they call the sky.

The cathedral towers below on the horizon
 looked like something out
of lustreless tinfoil,
but high above them the stars kept submerging.

There it goes! Can't you see it?
 Yes, I can!
In little flurries of sparks that stayed alight
the star was vanishing beyond recall.

It was a sweet spring night
 after the middle of May,
the warm air heaved with fragrance
and I breathed it in
 along with the stardust.

One summer I went to smell
 – illicitly it was then –
the tall-grown lilies
– they used to sell them at our market
out of a kitchen jug –
people laughed at me afterwards.
My face was also dusted with golden pollen.

Translation © 1985 David Short

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the translator and the British Library.

ASSISTANCE WANTED

TEREZIN SURVIVORS

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, - I would like to contact orphaned children who survived the Terezin (Theresienstadt) Nazi concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. It is now 40 years since the July 1945 flight from Prague Ruzin airport on 16 Royal Air Force planes. This transport was organized in a great hurry between the Repatriation Department of the Czechoslovak government and the Home Office in England because of lack of proper health facilities in Czechoslovakia at

that time.

I was responsible for the flight. Now I am writing the historical background to a larger study of political and rescue activities during World War II, and the immediate postwar period. The flight forms a part of the record.

DR. I.Y. ROSENBERG
(formerly Dep. Director of the Repatriation Department of the Benes government)
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