

## UPCOMING OCTOBER EVENTS

November/December  
*Slovo* Deadline  
October 1

Family Night  
October 2, 4 p.m.

Board of Trustees  
October 9, 7 p.m.

Board of Directors  
October 17, 7 p.m.

Pork Dinner  
October 27,  
12:30 p.m.

Pancake Breakfast  
Craft & Bake Sale  
November 24,  
9 a.m.– 1:30 p.m.

# Czech Roast Pork Dinner

## Sunday, October 27, 2013

Dinner includes:

Roast pork, raised-bread dumplings,  
sauerkraut, caraway rye bread,  
applesauce, dessert, and coffee.

Beer, wine and pop will be available for sale.

**\$16/adult; \$8/child under 9**

**Limited reserved seating at 12:30 p.m.**

Pre-paid reservations are required by **October 24**

For reservations call: 952 - 941 - 0426

Pre-paid takeout is also available by reservation

Hosted by  
Czech and Slovak  
Sokol Minnesota

**PUBLIC  
WELCOME**

C.S.P.S. Hall  
383 Michigan Street  
Saint Paul, MN  
55102

[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)

**Czech and Slovak  
Sokol Minnesota**

**2013**

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Past issues of *Slovo* and Sokol Minnesota's calendar of events are available online at [www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)

**Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes** By Denis Novak

**Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings Brothers and Sisters**

When these comments arrive in your mail, it will be mid-autumn. The crops will be harvested. In my case that means the tomatoes, planted very late in June, are either ripe and eaten or green and sitting on the windowsill where I hope they will ripen. The grand-kids are all settled back in school and the pool is closed for the season. The past few months have been a mixture of joys and sorrow. My grandson Tommy skated on the U.S. Under-17 Select Hockey team that played in Trnava, Slovakia, at the Five Nations Tournament and won the gold medal. On the sad side, my dog Reggie, a companion for almost fourteen years, had to be put down. So life goes on.

At Sokol Minnesota, our fall festival is over and our next big event is the Czech Roast Pork Dinner on Sunday, October 27, at 12:30. This is one of the events that lured me into joining Sokol. I encourage you to join me and enjoy a big plate of roast pork, raised-bread dumplings, and sauerkraut. Coffee and dessert are also included in the \$16 price. For a few extra dollars we will also sell you a beer. This combination of foods is considered by many to be the national dish of the Czech people. I agree.

There are two important events coming up in November, and it's not too early to start thinking about them. The first is the General Membership Meeting on Friday, November 22. This is the meeting at which you, the members of Sokol Minnesota, elect officers to serve on the Board of Directors. You can suggest people, or volunteer yourself, to become board members or to take leadership roles for various activities. This is your best chance to speak up and set the tone for Sokol activities for the next year. Too few members attend the quarterly membership events. Only two non-board members attended the August meeting and they came with daughters who are on the BOD. I hope this low attendance was a result of the oppressive heat rather than a lack of interest in how our organization is run. This year we are trying quarterly member/business meetings with a program rather than monthly meetings, in an effort to increase attendance. Perhaps we went the wrong way. In any case, there are no mind readers on the current BOD. Step up, speak out, and serve. Call me at 651-459-9404 and I will listen to your suggestions.

Next, on November 24, we will hold a Pancake Breakfast along with a Holiday Craft Sale and Bake Sale. This is a chance to buy *koláče* and other ethnic goodies prior to Thanksgiving and eat a good breakfast as well. Pre-order *koláče* at 952-941-0426 to be sure they will be available for you. This is also a chance to tour the Hall and see the results of your Legacy Fund Donations. Reservations are not needed for the breakfast.

I end with an old Czech proverb. *When there is lightning in October, winter creeps in.* I hope not this year. We had snow on too many events last winter. *Nazdar!*

**Honorary Consuls, plus Sokol Minnesota Committee Chairs (not seated on the BOD)**

Honorary Slovak Consul: Donald Pafko

Honorary Czech Consul: open

Past Honorary Czech Consuls: Josef Mestenhauer and Robert Vanasek

Sunshine Committee: Marlene Hinshaw

Gift Shop: Doreen McKenney

Housekeeping: Robert J. (Jake) Jacobson

Kitchen Coordinator: Jean Hall

Website: Craig Johnson

Volunteer Coordinator: open

Taneční Mládež and Teen Folk Dancers: Louise Wessinger

Hall Contacts: Chuck Draheim, Ed Hamernik, Joe Landsberger

Event Monitor: Ken Wyberg

*Slovo* newsletter: Marit Lee Kucera, Christy Banks

**Addresses:** President: [president@sokolmn.org](mailto:president@sokolmn.org) | Directors: [board@sokolmn.org](mailto:board@sokolmn.org) | Education and Language programs: [education@sokolmn.org](mailto:education@sokolmn.org) | Events: [events@sokolmn.org](mailto:events@sokolmn.org) | Finance and Fund Raising: [finance@sokolmn.org](mailto:finance@sokolmn.org) | Fitness Programming: [fitness@sokolmn.org](mailto:fitness@sokolmn.org) | Folk Dancing: [folkdancing@sokolmn.org](mailto:folkdancing@sokolmn.org) | Membership: [membership@sokolmn.org](mailto:membership@sokolmn.org) | Newsletter: [slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org) | Planning: [planning@sokolmn.org](mailto:planning@sokolmn.org) | Publications: [publications@sokolmn.org](mailto:publications@sokolmn.org) | Trustees: [trustees@sokolmn.org](mailto:trustees@sokolmn.org) | Webmaster: [webmaster@sokolmn.org](mailto:webmaster@sokolmn.org)

## Membership Updates

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the August 23 membership meeting, one couple, John and Gina Liemandt, were accepted into membership in Sokol Minnesota. Gina (Roers) has been a member of Sokol Minnesota; now she and John are joining as a couple. They had their wedding reception at C.S.P.S. Hall on August 17. They have interests in cooking, language, films, music, and festivals. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!  
Our next membership meeting is November 22.

## Education News

By Jean Draheim, Educational Director

Watch the *Slovo* and our website <[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)> for information on our language classes or more cooking classes,  *kroje* identification and preservation, leather belt crafting classes, embroidery, and our continuing Family History Project. For more information about any of these events or to

be included on our interests' lists, please contact Education Director Jean Draheim at 651-426-2826, or by email at <[education@sokolmn.org](mailto:education@sokolmn.org)>.

## Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors By Arlene Hamernik, Corresponding Secretary

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota greatly appreciates your donations supporting Sokol programs and the refurbishing of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall. Donations are listed under the following categories: under \$100; \$100-\$499; \$500-\$999; \$1000-\$4999; \$5000+, and undisclosed.

**General Fund:** under \$100: **Carol Richter**

**In memory of Georgiana Dolejsi:**

**Legacy Fund:** under \$100: **Azi Zeman.**

**In-kind Donations:** Czech items for the Fall Festival Silent Auction: **Jitka Sebek, Katherine Eckstrom.**

### Sokol Minnesota Annual Memberships

**Renewals:** Individual **\$45**; Couple **\$80**. Senior **\$35** (*over age 65 and member of Sokol for 5 years*); Senior couple **\$70**.

**New memberships:** Individual **\$50**; Couple **\$85**. This includes a one-time \$5 registration fee with our national organization, American Sokol Organization.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's annual membership runs from January 1 to December 31. Year 2013 dues for members joining after June 30 are reduced.

Membership applications: <[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)> or by request from Norm Petrik (612-822-6147). Please send your completed membership application and check to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Attn: Membership, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

**PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:** The *Slovo* is published ten times per year by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership. The *Slovo* Advisory Committee welcomes submissions. Send news, articles, and pictures digitally to <[slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org)>. **The deadline for the November/December 2013 issue is October 1.** Volunteer *Slovo* staff: Christy Banks, copy editor; M. L. Kucera, managing editor and production editor; Pamela Kotval, labels; Joyce Tesarek, photographer; Doreen McKenney, ad designer; Mary Cahill, Jean Draheim, Arlene Hamernik, Norm Petrik, Jitka Sebek, and Joan Sedlacek, advisors. Photograph for this issue provided by M. L. Kucera. This October 2013 issue of *Slovo* will be archived on the Sokol Minnesota website after October 31.

**If you are temporarily out of town for an extended stay, the post office will not forward your *Slovo* because we use bulk mail rates. If you wish to have this newsletter suspended during the time you are away or if you wish to have it sent to your out-of-town residence, please let us know. After one**

returned issue, we will hold all future issues until you notify us.  
We pay 46¢ to 66¢ for each returned issue

For a change of address or for problems with *Slovo* subscriptions, please contact us if you missed an issue or received notice of payment due when a payment has already been made.

Email: <[slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org)>, phone: 651-290-0542, or write: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102. *Thank you!*

*Slovo* accepts business card-size ads (3.5"x2"), paid in advance: one-time insertion \$25; 3 consecutive issues: \$65; 10 consecutive issues: \$175. Ad reservation deadline is 6 weeks before publication (October 15 for December issue), with ad and payment due by copy deadline (November 1 for December issue).

***Slovo* gift subscriptions and non-member renewals** are \$15/year (10 issues) (This rate is good through October 2014). Please include name, address, phone number, and email address with your new or renewing non-member subscription. Make your check to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota; send to: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *Slovo* Subscriptions/Renewals, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102



## C.S.P.S. Legacy Fund

Grants have funded several of the renovations of our C.S.P.S.

Hall, but many of these grants also must be matched. We ask for your support to insure that upcoming



projects can be completed as C.S.P.S. Hall celebrates its 126<sup>th</sup> year in 2013. Please consider a tax-deductible donation. *Thank you!*

Contact Joyce Tesarek at 612-822-6147 or <Joyce@sokolmn.org> to discuss donation or volunteer opportunities.

### LEGACY FUND DONATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

To help Restore, Renovate, and Refurbish the C.S.P.S. Hall, I make a tax deductible

single donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

5-year pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

per year for total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information about ways to include the Legacy Fund in my/our will/estate plans.

I would like my gift designated:

in memory of  in honor of:

List my name in the *Slovo* newsletter

List amount  Don't list amount

Don't list name or amount

Make checks payable to **Sokol MN**.

Write **Legacy Fund** in the memo line.

Please charge my gift to

Visa  Discover  Mastercard

AmericanExpress

# \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

**C.S.P.S. Hall Legacy Fund**

**383 Michigan Street**

**Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**

## Finance Committee Report By Joe Landsberger, Project Planning Task Force, and Joyce Tesarek, Fundraising Chair

Sokol Minnesota's Finance Committee oversees not only the budget, but also raising money to support activities, programming, and maintenance of our C.S.P.S. Hall. Capital projects, an important part of this stewardship, are frequently not covered in the annual budgets. In 2008, in celebration of the Hall's upcoming 125th anniversary, the Board of Directors created a Project Planning Task Force (PPTF) to list and prioritize major projects. Upgrade of heating and plumbing systems and installation of a fire-suppression sprinkling system are now completed, at a cost of \$320,746. We are finalizing the cost of air conditioning. Of course, there are more projects to come, and the PPTF has engaged the services of the architectural firm of Miller Dunwiddie to help us plan and prioritize how our Hall should serve us in the next 125 years!

The day-to-day operational expenses also must be paid for. These include insurance, utilities, programming expenses, and even expenditures for our fundraising events such as dinners and festivals. With the installation of our sprinkling system and the improved heating and plumbing systems, we should see a reduction in the cost of insurance. Recently, our property taxes were reduced. Aided by Jennifer L. Urban of the Urban Law Group, county assessors reviewed the property taxes we pay on our building. The revised valuation has been accepted by Ramsey County; in the future we will be tax exempt on 48% of our building's evaluation of \$563,000 due to our 501(c)3 status as a non-profit organization. The annual savings will be over \$10,000. The restaurant, as a commercial enterprise, will be responsible for the remainder. This is quite a savings to our budget!

In the next few months, we will present more detailed financial information. As Sokol Minnesota adapts to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we will realign expenses and income to reflect those changes. We count on you to continue to support Sokol as a cultural, historic, and fitness organization. Meanwhile, the Finance Committee will continue our efforts to practice good stewardship.

## August 2013 Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting By Cindy Coulter

The BOD approved a donation on behalf of Sokol Minnesota to Robin Magnuson-Harkness in memory of her husband, Dan Harkness, who passed away unexpectedly this summer. Robin has been a cherished employee as Sokol Minnesota's primary Gaming ticket seller for 25 years, along with the help of her daughter Brenda Magnuson. In efforts to improve the Gaming records and computerize them through new software, a Gaming consultant is under consideration.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota has reached-out to the C.S.P.S. Hall neighbors to receive their input on Sokol Minnesota's impact in the community. Positive feedback has been received regarding the theme dinners, events, and educational programs. Increased marketing is needed to get the word out to newcomers and families who have recently moved into the neighborhood so they can take advantage of the fitness, educational, cultural, and social programs that Sokol Minnesota offers to them right in their "backyard!"

As we gear-up for Sokol Minnesota's fall events, we are seeking volunteers for the October 27 Pork Dinner and the November 24 Pancake Breakfast. Behind the scenes, the BOD is planning for the New Year by approving the 2014 Calendar of Events which includes a January C.S.P.S. Hall rental for the CD release fundraiser for the Rose Ensemble, a Saint Paul-based music group, which is primarily vocal, specializes in medieval to modern music from around the world.

## The Prague Story Today

By Vanda Kašová, Columnist from Prague

It was August 21. I was lying on beautiful beach in Croatia and there should have been nothing more distant from my thoughts than tanks on the banks of the river Vltava 45 years ago in Prague. But I could not help it. To my mind came a black-and-white picture that I saw somewhere a few years ago. Five maybe six tanks in the lower part of Palacký Square heading towards Anděl on the other side of the river. Armed foreign soldiers from the Soviet Bloc's Warsaw Pact (Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Hungary) were in Prague, ending forever the Prague Spring. There were some people milling around and the Castle was above in the background. The despair! My lucky generation cannot even imagine the horrors of those days. And I started to think about people, for whom those terrible views were their last memories of Prague. What would they see today?

The very same banks of Vltava in the very heart of the city, which were occupied by tanks in 1968, are now some of the liveliest places in Prague. When the weather is nice, it so great to sit by the river on Náplavka (which is only a few centimeters above water level), have a beer, and talk with friends. What fabulous scenery! On Friday night, there is live music and DJs. The party goes on for hours till you get cold and have to run to catch a taxi to get back home.

This is what has changed a lot in a last few years. In every possible place, on the roofs of buildings, in the old factories and houses and many courtyards, there is a space for a new café, arts exhibition, or design market. Every weekend farmers markets emerge in numerous places, and the merchants sell fruits and vegetables and meat from their own farms. You can have lunch, buy a delicious fresh fish, enjoy lemonade and *koláče*, and spend a sunny day there.

And this is what I love about the place. Almost any time you go out, you can be surprised; you can discover something new. And I am not a newcomer to Prague; I have been discovering it for almost 30 years now. And this is what people who come to Prague, maybe after dozens of years, should see: Prague blossoming again!

*Marit Lee Kucera (left), Slovo managing editor, with our Columnist from Prague, Vanda Kašová (right), walked along the Vltava in the very area Vanda mentions in this article, with the Prague Castle in the background, on 11 September 2013.*



## Sokol Member News By Marlene Hinshaw

We welcome new member **John Liemandt**. John married Sokol member **Gina Roers** on August 17. Their wedding party was held at the C.S.P.S. Hall. Gina is the daughter of Sokol members **Jan and Mike Roers** of Wadena, Minnesota. She is also the niece of longtime member **Joyce Tesarek**. Congratulations to Gina and John on their marriage! We look forward to sharing friendship and good times with you.

Sadly, I announce the death of longtime member **Eugene (Gene) L. Kubes**, age 86. Gene was an intelligent and interesting guy. He retired as a Ramsey County Family Court Referee. He was very proud of his full Czech heritage and liked visiting his Czech relatives and friends in the New Prague area. He was very interested in genealogy and loved to fish. I'll miss having conversations with him. He attended and supported many Sokol events over the years.

Congratulations to **Steve Fritze!** Steve, a recently retired CFO of Saint Paul-based Ecolab, Inc., has been appointed to serve on the Otter Tail Corporation board of directors. Full retirement doesn't seem to be in Steve's future.

Help me gather news about our members:  
marle5421@aol.com or 651-340-8619. *Thanks!*

### NEWS and NOTES of Interest to Slovo Readers

Would you like to know more about current events in the Czech and Slovak Republics? A new feature on the Czech and Slovak Culture Center website is **What is New in the Slovak and Czech Republics**, a monthly list of informative Slovak and Czech news items. Compiled by Anthony Temperamente, a Minnesota transplant living in Prague, in collaboration with his wife, the items are carefully selected for their accuracy and insight. <http://www.cs-center.org/wp/2013/08/what-is-new-in-the-slovak-and-czech-republics/>

SCCC presents *Druhá Tráva*, the widely popular Czech band of new acoustic world music with blue grass influences, in concert on Saturday, November 2, at Armatage Elementary Auditorium, 56th and Penn Avenue South, Minneapolis. \$15. Information: <[www.cs-center.org](http://www.cs-center.org)> or <[www.druhatrava.com](http://www.druhatrava.com)>

To keep interest in Czech heritage alive among young people, **The Czech Heritage Junior Royalty**, based New Prague, has started its search for candidates for the 2014 Junior Ambassadors. Candidacy is open to both boys and girls of Czech descent ages 9 through 15, with no residency restrictions. Four individuals are selected to promote their Czech heritage and the Czech community for a one-year reign. The prize package includes a crown, sash, a one-year membership to the Domaci Czech Folk Dancers, and a monetary award after completion of their reign. The Coronation is at 3 p.m., Sunday, December 8 in New Prague at the American Legion Park Ballroom. Festivities include the 4th annual European Christmas Event from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, contact Deb Ziskovsky, Czech Heritage Junior Royalty Director, 952-652-2677 or <[ADZiskovsky@aol.com](mailto:ADZiskovsky@aol.com)>

## Discover Czechoslovak Literature through a Century of Short Stories By Gwen Willems, Ph.D.

*Czech and Slovak Short Stories*. Edited by Jeanne W. Nemcova. London: Oxford University Press, 1967, 296 pp. Available in libraries and used-book stores.

These 20 Czechoslovak stories by 20 authors vary in length, setting, and style, but all are memorable slices of life with social significance and a deep humanist moral. Many of the authors are familiar: Karel Čapek, Jaroslav Hašek, Bohumil Hrabal, Ivan Klíma, Arnošt Lustig, Božena Němcová, Jan Neruda, Ivan Olbracht, and Josef Škvorecký. Years of original publication would have been a welcome addition.

The characters search for answers to ethical questions. As the editor noted, "Death and authority tread through almost all of these pages—death the ever-present companion of an oppressed people, authority which was and is omnipresent all over Central Europe." Yet the stories are not as heavy as this suggests. Among my favorites are:

"Three Men and a Shark," by Hašek. After a boisterous night out, three men who made their livings in somewhat dubious ways—a former editor of *The Animal World*, a snake tamer, and a carousel proprietor—stroll through Prague. They see an unusual fish in a seafood-shop window, buy it, and begin raising money by performing shows in small towns, telling tall tales about the shark. Throughout their comic adventures, the decomposing shark becomes smellier and smellier and the trio gets into more trouble.

"The Great Catholic Water Fast," by Škvorecký. A boy living in mostly atheist Czechoslovakia has a head full of mysterious Bible stories, a fascination with religious rites and his uncle the priest, and little guidance. To one-up other boasting boys at summer camp, he claims Catholics have a three-day fast excluding beverages made with water. The next morning he begins attempting his invented fast.

"Mordair," by Nesvadba. In this science-fiction story, a new airline seems to have none of the discomforts of other airlines. Mordair flights are cheap, on schedule, and never cancelled nor involved in accidents, but it also has no lorries for refueling, and that is the mystery.

"Journey to a Dead Man," by Klíma. With his typical clarity of language, Klíma takes us along with a doctor called to a pub when a body is found under a table early one morning. The exhausted doctor examines the body at the cemetery and then is reluctantly prodded by his driver to visit various people and sites to investigate the man's life, death, and how his body ended up unnoticed for hours.

"Gabor, Gabor . . .," by Aškenázy. This tender and wise father-son story is told from the perspective of the loving father, Big Gabor. Little Gabor is his father's delight. At school, Little Gabor becomes a star pupil who makes his father proud. Passages about sterilization and the "gypsy problem" set the stage for escalation of Nazi discrimination against Romani people.

*You're invited to join Literary Ventures on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon:*

**October 26** to discuss *The Coast of Bohemia* by Edith Pargeter.

**November 23** to discuss *Cross Roads* by Karel Čapek (both at the House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul).

**December 28** to discuss *The Review of Contemporary Fiction: Slovak Fiction*, at the C.S.P.S. Hall.

*For the full schedule, go to <www.cs-center.org> or contact: gwen@cs-center.org. Gwen is coordinator of the Literary Ventures: Czech and Slovak book discussion group.*

### ***Shifting Landscapes in Central Europe***

by Dr. Josef Mestenhauser.

This collection of articles, previously published in the *Slovo* and on the Czech Slovak Culture Center website, is now available in both book (\$16) and CD (\$14) format.

The publication debut took place at the Czech and Slovak Festival on September 15.

The compilation of 52 articles in one volume emphasizes the breadth and continuity of Dr. Mestenhauser's thoughts. The book or CD may be purchased either at the Sokol gift shop or the CSCC website <cs-center.org>.

Sales are a fundraiser for both Sokol and CSCC.

### **SOKOL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Sokol Minnesota is loaded with talent and expertise. We'd like to know what you could share by volunteering. Your reward is getting to know other Sokol members and making new friends. There has never been a better time to become involved with Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. Call soon! Call now!

**Pork Dinner on October 27** is looking for table setters, cook's helpers, dinner servers, coffee servers, bar tenders, cleanup, dishwashers, set-up/take down, more. 612-822-6147 (Joyce).

**Sokol Volunteer Coordinator.** Work with the best group of volunteers in the state. Contact: Events @sokolmn.org

**Gaming Committee** needs two more members. Also, help with **Friday Night Bingo** this fall. <highgrove@comcast.net> or 651-224-3034 (Steve).

**Publicity Team wants help** sending press releases by email or posting events in online calendar or delivering event flyers to local libraries, shops, community centers, or coffee houses. Or if you have graphics or database skills, you can be a great help to our Publicity Team. 651-225-1285 (Jyni).

**Board of Directors elections** are November 22. Nominating Committee is seeking candidates now. Call 651-290-0542. Here is your chance to share in the leadership of Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota!

## ***Life and Many Deaths in the Protektorat Boehmen und Maehren\****

**March 1939 – June 1945**

**By Dr. Josef A. Mestenhauser, Distinguished International Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota, Department of Educational Policy and Administration, Comparative and International Development Education**

**Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic (1999-2009)**

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared on the CSCC website <cs-center.org>.*



### ***Part 3. Consequences and Lasting Impact of Nazi Rule.***

The past two articles about the Nazi occupation of the former Czechoslovakia were largely descriptive. I relied on my own and my family's experience, on substantial readings and accounts of others, and most recently on a brilliantly documented book by Chad Bryant entitled *Prague in Black*. This study was written in the style of the best historiographies and was researched meticulously, and it received acclaim from historians specializing in Central Europe. Yet I found a few things missing and other things were too highly generalized to satisfy my curiosity.

These shortcomings are not a failure of the individual writer, but a failure of our fragmented knowledge, the result of being vested in highly-specialized academic disciplines and sub-disciplines that have their own culture and standards for writing. For example, Bryant's style is highly objective and written from the position of a disinterested observer, even when he is dealing with the most intimate emotions, ethnic conflicts, deaths, suppression of all rights, and the most brutal force used against entire populations. To capture these perspectives would require the writer to reach out to other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and most importantly from my point of view, anthropology.

The trouble with knowledge specific to a discipline is that scholars, and for that matter consultants, tend to give the impression that they are providing a complete and exhaustive picture and do not search for "other knowledge." They consider themselves to be "experts" whose education has focused entirely on specialized knowledge, no matter how much educational institutions claim they provide balanced, interdisciplinary training.

Historians tend to have another bias, one that explains things chronologically as if history was linear and continual. History indeed has continuity, but in the case of Czechoslovakia, its history is anything but continuous. It is highly discontinuous, with the result that the country's citizens have to constantly adjust to new circumstances and regimes that try to undo each previous one. When I am asked where I am from, my answer could vary. In modern history, my birthplace of Bohemia has been a territory in eight consecutive states: (1) the Republic of Czechoslovakia (1918–1938); (2) the Republic of Czecho-

Slovakia (October 1938–March 1939); (3) the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, (1939–1945); (4) the Republic of Czechoslovakia (without Ruthenia, May 1945–February 1948); (5) the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1948–1960); (6) the Czecho-Slovak Federative Republic (1960–1989); (7) the Republic of Czechoslovakia (1989–1992), and (8) the Czech Republic (January 1, 1993 to present). Nazism impacted all these regimes. Had it not been for Nazi Germany, Czechoslovakia could have gradually developed into a model multi-national democracy with respect for all minorities, a high standard of living for all, and with a civil society that already had an excellent start. This process may have required many years; President Tomáš Masaryk thought the country needed fifty years to accomplish such a goal.

Each academic discipline has its own way of categorizing people and events. Bryant, for example, created categories of people that lumped them into Czechs, Slovaks, Reich Germans, Sudeten Germans, Protectorate Germans, "mishlings" (Jews with mixed marriages), and "amphibians" (non-Germans married to any of the above category of Germans) who could be either Czechs or German. Even the Nazis had difficulties dealing with "mixed" people because their ideology called for a pure race as the basis of the Reich society. The problem with establishing racial categories is that a category is intended to define what things are and what they are not, and categorizing people allows for generalizations to be made regarding their placement.

Similarly, Bryant has defined various periods of time that he calls "phases" or "turning points," such as the Anschluss of Austria, the split of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, the occupation of the rest of the country, the treaty Hitler signed with the U.S.S.R., the war against Poland, Russian annexation of Eastern Poland, the occupation of Denmark and Norway, the war on the Western front, including the fall of France, the war in North Africa, occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece by Italians, and finally the *Drang nach Osten*, the war against the U.S.S.R. While Bryant's turning points are used to establish "phases" (as if these started and ended at precise times), people residing in Europe (and specifically in Czechoslovakia) lived their lives from day to day, not from phase to phase, making adjustments as required, concentrating on survival, with most often covering their "backs" in case another regime's whim became a new rule.

I have a problem with scholars, TV commentators, and common people who try to be objective critical thinkers by juxtaposing one point of view with another one. I call doing so the "on the one hand/and on the other hand" syndrome, something that implies that only two possible points of view are possible, that both have roughly equal value, and that the viewpoints are in fact the opposites of each other. For example, we might hear that the Czechs suffered greatly under Nazi rule, but that, *on the other hand*, Germans were also its victims. One can see immediately the asynchrony of such objectivity, especially when dealing with centuries of interactions between Czechs and Germany. Any one event or situation must be placed in the larger context.

\*Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

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