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The Czechs and Europe

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Preface

When Europe was experiencing the dramatic year 1989, in Czechoslovakia epochal changes passed democratically and culturally, what the world press labelled as the “Velvet revolution”.

Many people were asking how it was possible that the Czechoslovak youth, especially students, managed to act in such way when they had not lived in conditions of the classic democracy.

It cannot be forgotten that it regarded a demonstration at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the nacist intervention against Czech universities in 1939. At that time, it represented an intervention against the whole Czech society known in Europe for its democracy and national tolerance. And the Czechoslovak youth joint this tradition in 1989.

In 1939, students of almost all the world came out for the defence of Czech students and in 1989 the Czech youth wanted to support the unification process of whole Europe in favour of peace, progress and democracy, which the European Union was enforcing.

It was a step in the right direction and integration of Europe and efforts for its unification have reached more successes from that period. Even though when doing this, it was necessary to overcome many problems and difficulties, which the daily life brings.

Since 2004 the Czech Republic full member of the European union, first international organization uniting Europe on the basis of democracy. The Czechs are its citizens. with all rights and can take part on all its activity for consolidate the coexistence and cooperation of European nations.

European union is today not only a very important factor of world economics, but it has also a great responsibility in all its activities for strengthening world security and peace.

Jiří Maštálka

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Introduction

The Czech republic became a member state of the European Union in 2004 and thoughts appeared, about how much the Czechs are aware of their membership in Europe and if they consider themselves Europeans.

The sight at a map and thinking about the Czech history answer relatively expressly, as Czech lands in the centre of European continent cannot belong anywhere else than to Europe; and the history does not let us doubt that the Czechs were fundamentally touched by everything that was going on in Europe and what they had to perceive and understand as its inhabitants.

The Czechs in the Centre of Europe and the Czech State

It is known from the history of Europe that in the period of movement of nations, Slavic nations arrived into its centre and among them the Czechs, which settled here. Their history is thus inseparably connected with the history of Europe in the good and in the bad.

From the geopolitical point of view, the Czechs lived in the centre of the continent with no access to seas, what significantly influenced their destiny. They were surrounded by other nations from all sides and their life was always influenced by good or bad relations with them. That means that the life of the Czechs was connected with almost all, what was happening in Europe and their destiny was influenced by that. At the same time, relations with neighbours are only exceptionally without any problems and thus they were sometimes good and friendly and some other time bad, even hostile.

Long time ago, leaders of state decided on destiny of their citizens, if it were principalities, kingdoms, kaiserdoms; and common people did not have any rights and they could not decide on their own destinies. It was important for the Czechs that already in the end of the 9th century they accepted Christianity, which meanwhile gained power over the western and the southern part of Europe. It was awkward that the Czechs familiarized themselves with this religion mostly by messengers required by the Byzantine empire, who prepared the most important texts for them, especially the Bible translated into the old-slavic, thus for the Czechs understandable language. On the contrary, Christianity based on the Latin text of the Bible dominated in other parts of Europe and only later it was translated into other national languages, what later had a significant importance for the dissemination of literacy.

Gradually the Czech community organized itself into administrative units, which stepwise evolved into states. There were personalities of aristocratic origin in their forefront, and from which some of them succeeded as earls or kings. During feudalism, these crowned heads did not come always from a nation, which they ruled, as aristocracy allied against the lieges in order to keep their privileges.

In the beginning of the 10th century, the Přemyslidz stood in the forefront of Bohemia and thus the Czech kingdom played a quite important role in the central Europe. However, their lineage vanished by sword in the beginning of the 14th century and the period of the Luxemburgs came to power. These, especially during the rule of Charles IV, called “father of the homeland”, made from Prague one of the most important cities and cultural centres of Europe and the Czech kingdom belonged to the most important ones in Europe at that time.

Hussitism and George from Poděbrady

In that period, in many European countries a crisis affected the Catholic Church, within which the religious life also in Bohemia was developing. The crisis reached extraordinary measures here, when Bohemia was left with no ruler in the beginning of the 15th century and the spokesperson of the unsatisfied peoples, Jan Hus, was burned to death as a misbeliever in Konstanz.

Hussitistic storms belong with their extent and consistent critics of the mischief of the church to the most consistent ones in history and they had a totally extraordinary significance for the Czech society, which grew over borders of the country. However, it was not managed to overcome the crisis of the church and only one century later, the German Reformation reached some success. Hussitism overran its period for over a hundred years.

Hussits' effort to follow the Bible as exactly as possible in the everyday life lead towards the effort to learn to read and write. Even Hus himself contributed to certain simplification of the Czech spelling and thus the knowledge of the Bible was very high as it was, moreover, considered as a prove of genuity of the religious persuasion and belief. It was so broad that the later pope Pius II., who personally participated at the crusades to Bohemia, and who belonged to program adver-

saries of hussitism, wrote in his book that “many hussitist women knew the Bible better than many of the Catholics priests”.

One managed to suppress war actions of the most consistent supporters of Jan Hus in Bohemia, however only choosing of George from Poděbrady as “the Hussitist king” brought the cooling down. It regarded a unanimous vote of the catholic and protestant aristocracy as well as of representatives of cities. George proved competent as a provincial governor instead of the undeaged king; as relatively soon after the hussitist storms and crusades he managed to stabilize the country economically and to secure peace in it; and that’s why he was chosen in the interest of the future prime of the Czech kingdom.

He knew dreads of a war from his own experiences; and that’s why he came out with a proposal for creation of a council of European monarchs, which would look for solving of problems in Europe by peaceful means, thus by negotiations. Proposal of “the Treaty on Promotion of Peace in all the Christianity” was elaborated in Latin (*Tractatus Pacis Toti Christianite Fiende*) so all the educated world at that time would understand it. George then send out a big message in order to familiarize European monarchs with his proposal. The moment for its creation might have not occurred, however all of those, who were proposing the world organization for establishing peace especially in the 20th century, which was supposed to be the League of Nations and then the United Nations Organization, reminded George’s incentive for peace. The fact that one managed to keep the choice of religion, which was valid during his rule, even if sometimes with difficulties and not perfectly at all till the Thirty years’ war, was maybe even more important. Also in this the Czech kingdom could have represented an example for much bigger and more significant countries of Europe.

A significant part of the Czechs could read and write and thus had a higher level of education than people in some other European countries. Also the hussitist singing is considered in history as a contribution of the cultural scholarship of the Czechs and maybe because of this Bohemia, from which most of the outstanding musicians and composers came from, was considered as Europe’s conservatoire in the 18th century. And regarding education, the Czechs were marked as the most educated nation of the all kingdom of Austria-Hungary at the statistical census in the end of the 19th century.

The Thirty years' war and J. A. Komenský

The Thirty years' war represented a huge catastrophe not only for Bohemia but also for all central Europe. Its result forced a big amount of the best individuals to their departure from Bohemia because of their religious belief. For all of them it is enough to recall a man, which was awarded an honorary title "the teacher of nations" for his extensive pedagogical work. Till now pedagogues of the world are professed to the message of Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius), whose attitudes to education of children and adults are valid and inspirative into a great extent till today.

It took very long to overcome all terrible results of the Thirty years' war and it was enormously difficult. It regarded not only a huge war devastation of Bohemia but also cultural losses. A considerable part of the population fell under the dominance of a foreign condottiere who got not only aristocratic renures for their war services from the imperator but also large fortunes confiscated from the Czech non-Catholic aristocracy, which had to leave the country when it did not want to resign its religion. This provincial aristocracy had nothing common with the local population, mostly not even the language.

The Czechs were only very hardly looking for ways to reconstruction of their cultural forwardness without majority of its protestant aristocracy and many of the significant cultural celebrities and by far not only religious thinkers.

As it is known, misery often forces to look for ways for realization and the Czechs managed to find enough power among them to succeed not only as musicians, painters, sculptureres and other artists but also as capable, skilful and inventive craftsmen. In various castles and chateaus, we admire up till now, what they managed to create for their masters, without their names having been noted. And soon this handycraft of Czech craftsmen was supposed to be realized in establishing industry and other fields and to give appreciation to the ability of the Czechs in the economic realm.

The Czech Nation and Democracy

Nations were able to begin to influence their destiny only after the French revolution of 1789 opened the way towards the most democratic organization of society, even if it was necessary to fight for it in

many countries still for a long time. Reforms of Joseph II made the first step in Austria and the 19th century became a period of removing various social barriers in Europe and the Czech lands, and of opening ways towards the possibility for large masses of population to express their opinions by means of elections at first and gradually to influence their future also by various associated activities.

It is possible to speak about the Czechs as about a nation only in the beginning of the 19th century in the period when one started to create modern nations. One considers a nation mostly as a community of individuals realizing their national commonalty; and in the case of Czechs it came to it from the beginning of the 19th century by the Enlightenment period.

The Czech lived in “their” Czech kingdom, Moravian principality and Silesian duchy in that period and they were part of the multinational Austrian kaiserdom and later of Austria-Hungary where the Habsburg dynasty had the decisive power in Vienna. The Czech kingdom formally existed but the Habsburg monarch, first of all considered to be the Austrian emperor. The Czechs were always suspicious to him that a piece of that heretical Jan Hus remained in them.

There was none in the Vienna court who would stand up for the Czechs as most of the aristocracy was linked with the Habsburg dynasty at that time and it was connecting its future with it. The Czechs were too much supportive for democracy into all its results and the Czech aristocracy could not support this, except of few exemptions.

The 19th century started to open the door to realization of common people, which were supposed to become franchilanes of modernized countries in the sense of revolutionary and democratic ideas. Ruling groupings of Great Powers sensed it well and not by accident they started to cooperate mostly against everything, what was supposed to follow revolutionary and democratic ideas of the previous epochs. “The Saint Alliance” of Austria, France, Prussia and Russia was supposed to rule in the spirit of the “Concert of Great Powers” in cooperation with the Great Britain and in conviction that they would always find a common solution for interventions against the reconstruction of revolutionary ideas. However, a fight against ideas is never easy and usually it is very difficult.

The Czechs started to gain their citizen rights only gradually by their meaningful work, knowledge and by national awareness. It was very interesting how they managed to be inspired in this effort by

experiences of other European nations. The Czech conception of a modern democratic society's organization had a European dimension not only thoughtwise but also otherwise even if it always managed to modify its practice according to conditions of the Habsburg monarchy.

For example, in the first half of the 19th century, Czech radical democrats inspired themselves by ideas of the Irish revolt against the British occupation, what led to designation of their alliance "the Repeal". Italian effort for freeing the country from foreign occupants and for unification led establishers of the "Sokol" to incorporating red shirts reminding fights of Garibaldi's forces in Sicily into the "Sokol" uniform, even though the "Sokol" did not have any similar armed revolt in its program. Similarly, forms of fights of Italian Carbonari were not overtaken, however on the contrary, a name of the Czech secret movement the "Maffie" of the beginning of the First World War was inspired by a name of an Italian secret organisation.

National revival of the Czech nation realised very exactly the link between its destiny and the evolution in Europe thanks to the leadership educated in an European way; and that's why it observed European happenings very carefully and it was looking for an alliance with those powers, which could have helped the Czech nation to its freedom and development. It was not an easy way; however the Czechs appeared to be very resourceful.

First of all, they focused their attention on education and teachers in village schools, often designated as "obscure patriots"; they played an enormous role, the same as many patriotic priests, which at the same time had to cope with opposite approach of their superiors.

Exactly translations of the best pieces of the world literature, from Latin to present pieces of French, German, English, Italian, Russian literature and also literature of other nations helped the Czech reader to familiarize with life of other nations and to learn to feel and to understand their differences. Only gradually the quality Czech literature got to the Czech reader and as the Czech language was returning from the countryside and suburbs also to big cities; and it was enriched by overtaking the scientific knowledge, for which new Czech expressions had often to be found.

The Czechs and Austria in Europe

The revolutionary year 1848, opening the way towards a modern reconstruction of the state in the sense of democracy, represented a significant milestone of the 19th century in Europe. Various changes occurred basically democratically, by public meetings and elections of representatives and then by negotiations of Czech representatives with regional representatives. František Palacký appreciated this a lot as it reflected certain democratic forwardness being established within the Czech political representation and the whole society.

Local chief general Windischgrätz used the peaceful situation in Prague, in comparison for example with the situation in Vienna; he had provoked streets conflicts and fights, including an artillery bombing of cities, and received a compliment for their tough suppression from the Vienna court and later he received even the Marshal's baton. It was the first victory of a tough hand over the revolutionary movement in Austria, for which the Czechs use to be criticized, in the sense they did not fight consistently enough.

On the contrary, it tends to be forgotten that at the council in Kroměříž, where the council was moved from revolutionary Vienna, it was exactly Czech representatives who submitted proposals for a constitution, which could have started the reconstruction of Austria from a multinational monarchy living from the past into a modern state, which could play a significant role in the European politics only like that. By democratisation of the whole state organization, including guaranteeing of rights of nations and national minorities, the Austrian organization could become an example of a modern European state and a significant part of European politics in the 19th century.

That was in the period when František Palacký supported the opinion: "If it was not the Austrian state, we would have to contribute to its creation to the maximum extent so it would be created in the interest of Europe and even of humanity". This attitude was designated as the "Austroslavism" and it was often criticised in political discussions. However, again it regarded understanding of the European dimension of the Czech nation's destiny and the effort for democratic organization of central Europe in the interest of the Czech nation.

However, these proposals were very difficult for the Habsburgs to accept and the fall of Austria as a Great Power began by suppression

of the revolution and by a retrieval to old orders in the beginning of the 19th century. That ended not only by its defeat but by a total disintegration of the empire based exactly on an insufficient respect of its multinational structure in the end of the First World War.

It may seem to be impossible that exactly Czech representatives Palacký, Havlíček, Rieger and other ones were helping to look for the way towards the modernization of Austria and by that towards the preservation of the unfavoured Habsburg monarchy. It was again abilities of leading Czech representatives to understand the broad European coherence when they saw the most suitable way towards the Czech nation's evolution within the modernization of Austria. They realized the growing tension in the centre of Europe, for which repression Austria, as well as czarist Russia, strengthening Prussia, then Germany and France with no doubts, or Great Britain made effort, always trying to intervene into the European politics; what their presence in the Saint Alliance and enforcing of the ultraconservative politics proved. Exactly the modernization of Austria could strengthen its position of a superpower and, at the same time, it could give a possibility of a modern evolution and by that also of strengthening of the state, which could have become their state and not a "prison for nations". These ideas marked the right way for the future evolution of European nations as once the Georges's from Poděbrady proposal for the European peace's guarantee did. Basically only the European integration process set onto this way in the 20th century; however, till then nations of Europe had to go through doors of two terrible world wars.

Czech politicians realised the wrong politics of the monarchy concentrated on a rebuilding of Austria into dualistic Austria-Hungary. František Palacký warned before this step providently again when he wrote in his reflections on the topic "The Idea of the Austrian State": "We, the Slavs, will have to face it with a true pain but with no awe. We existed before Austria did, we will exist also after it".

The second half of the 19th century was bringing a dangerously growing power tension in Europe. After the war of Prussia and Austria with Denmark, fights in Italy, Prussia-Austrian and Prussia-French war and conflicts and wars on the Balkan Peninsula, it came to a creation of two Great Power blocks, which were threatening by a much bigger conflict. Germany together with Austria-Hungary and Italy created the Triple Entente and the Triple Entente represented France, Russia and Great Britain.

For Democratization of the Self-governance

Czech politicians did not have any possibility to intervene into these famous as well as secret diplomatic negotiations and they right focused on the economic and cultural building-up of Czech lands and on the effort for democratization of the self-governance and by this on a contribution to the state system's modernization. Evolution of the national economy showed up soon as Czech lands became the most developed part of the Habsburg monarchy, what economic expositions and developing mutual business with a wide range of European states and even with overseas areas absolutely proved.

It was totally logical that this expansion required a very qualified work force and that not only in industry; and thus the Czechs were welcomed as competent entrepreneurs in all the country. Even a Czech bank was established, which permeated not only out of the Czech territory but also out of the monarchy, especially to the Balkans.

The social life was developing fast in Czech cities and the national awareness was growing, which was manifested in the creation of Czech associations of various profiles. Students became organized and they helped to establish libraries and reading places, a voluntary movement was getting stronger following the puppet tradition of Czech revivalists, one was establishing artistic discussion rounds according to the example of Prague, balls were becoming significant events of the city social life, one managed to build secondary schools with Czech language as the teaching language and one even managed to divide the Charles University into a Czech and a German part.

Association activity followed very democratic rules from the beginning, all members had one vote and they were on familiar terms mutually, all functionaries had to be elected and that based on all democratic principles. Also Czech women had the opportunity to participate at the social life equally. All, which the Vienna rule refused or even prohibited, was accepted with sympathies.

Education towards national awareness based on the knowledge of the national history and František Palacký as a historiographer of the Czech Kingdom became not by accident the "father of the nation". One followed all positive and democratic aspects of the Czech history and that's why members of Czech associations were mostly on familiar terms and they called themselves "brother" and "sister".

The Czech society was being created almost totally without any participation of the aristocracy; that's why the Czech national awareness evolved very democratically and, at the same time, it missed bigger self-confidence. Maybe it represented one of the most democratic movements in the whole Europe and that's why the nascent workpeople's movement never existed out of this democratic national stream, even if, of course, various attitudes and also disputes arose.

The “Sokol” movement

The “Sokol” (the Falcon), a movement of sportsmen, which wanted to evolve body and mind according to the example of the ancient Greek “kalokagatheia” with slogans “Healthy mind in a healthy body” and “Make your arms stronger and serve your motherland”, had a big merits in this development. Except of leaders of the sport units, one elected educators and that not only for youths but also for adults. One organized trips to surrounding memorial places of the Czech history, what was strengthening the national awareness a lot, and unions and meetings with educating content were organized instead of religious journeys. The Sokol's members performed in unique uniforms at ceremonial occasions and red shirts of men symbolized the European dimension of this activity.

The Sokol movement tried to respect all democratic principles properly and its patriotism in the spirit of revival of the nation did not abandon to nationalism, which, on the contrary, won in neighbouring Germany, and which was receiving response also from German inhabitants in Czech lands, as well as from other parts of the Austria-Hungary monarchy. It seems that certain national tolerance was kept within the Czech national movement as well as a mutual religious respect except of other; and that not only in the link with the history but also because exactly the work-people and working classes did not abandon to the nationalist hate, which had always weakened their organized movements for the social justice.

The Sokol's members managed to establish friendly relations with similar organizations of sportsmen in other countries mostly thanks to gymnasium activities of the Czechs in these countries, where they started to organize sport performances according to the habits from their home country.

These activities were often completed by establishing of commercial contacts what also helped better information on the Czech lands as a culturally developed regions of Europe, since this time nearly unknown, because the Czechs could travel only with Austrian-Hungarian passports.

Prague - the of Europe Cultural Centre

A unique situation was gradually created. Prague was still officially called “the royal capital”, however the Czech kingdom was only a part of the imperial-royal Austria-Hungary and it had no own representation abroad. Only the emperor, who was formally also the Czech king, represented the Habsburg monarchy at the international forum.

Despite of this, Prague remained in the forefront of the European interest mostly as an old and famous cultural centre keeping a connection with other big cities by various means. Except of others, it represented the seat of the oldest university in the north of the Alps, at that time already divided into a Czech and a German part. At the same time, it was famous as the capital of Czech lands, the most economically developed part of the Habsburg monarchy, and economic relations were becoming more significant and they were often developing with no regard to political attitudes.

The rule of Vienna had tried not to allow establishment of consulates of other states in Prague for a long time, however, it was not possible to resist the dominant tendency of developing consular relations forever. With the start of the new century, Prague was becoming the seat of numerous consulates despite Vienna’s resistance, and that not only of the USA, taking care only about matters of citizens coming from Czech lands there, but mostly of European states, even of Great Powers.

While economic relations of Prague were relatively fast changing and developing successfully mostly with capitals of other European states, the Sokol’s members were helping to develop social relations a lot, on whose invitations Sokol’s members from the USA were arriving - where Czech emigrants established their organizations - however, also delegation of similar physical education organizations from France, Croatia, Poland, Slovenia and later Montenegro, Bulgaria and Denmark and other countries participated at Sokol’s meetings in Prague.

Development of not only economic but also political and social relations of municipal administrations of significant cities from these countries were closely linked with it, as situations of many of cities of these countries were complicated similarly to as the position of Prague was. One was developing friendly relations with Croatian Zagreb, Slovenian Ljubljana, Polish Warsaw and Krakow, Lithuanian Vilnius, Latvian Riga, Estonian Tallinn, Finnish Helsinki but also with Irish Dublin and Norwegian Oslo (still Kristiania at that time).

Also news about inner political issues were getting into the world and very sharp political disputes on genuity of old Czech manuscripts - presented the Czech society not only as a very democratic but also ideologically forward one, which was refusing falsification - which were supposed to enrich the past. Similarly also the fight on a just trial with a Jewish young man accused of a ritual murder of a Czech girl confirmed that the Czech public was not impressed by the primitive anti-Semitism but that it mostly supported the democratic justice. In both cases the Czech MP, T. G. Masaryk, whose name thus became very famous in European political circles, played an important role

The Czechs and the European Politics

In the beginning of the 20th century, the world had already known about Czech lands and it counted with it as with a part of Europe; however, the way to an autonomous Czech state was still very difficult and it seemed that also quite distant. That's why also the Czech public drew its attention to international issues, as it was always more realizing how its destiny depended on the development of Europe.

Growing dependence of Austria-Hungary on Germany, which did not keep its expansionist plans in secrecy, was threatening that also the Czechs could have been pulled to the war in imperial uniforms, in which they did not have any interest. In the pending war they had more sympathies for the nascent Triple Entente of France, Russia and Great Britain.

When fights in the Balkans started, the Czech public logically stood on the side of Slavic nations fighting for their freedom against the Turkish dominancy and that, moreover, because the Vienna government was Turkey's ally. The Habsburg monarchy always considered the Balkan Peninsula as an area of its special interest; it occupied

Bosna and Herzegovina in a complicated way when Slovenia and Croatia had been its part for already a longer period, as well as many other Balkan areas including all eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.

Cooperation of Balkan Slavs was attacked by the Vienna government in various ways. And again the public defence of the Croats sent to an Austria-Hungary court for a sversive activity by the Czech MP T.G.Masaryk had a big response in Europe; and the Czechs were thus becoming logical allies of the southern Slavs.

It was not an accident that provocating military manoeuvres in Bosna and Herzegovina became a frame, where the attempt on the Austria-Hungary successor gave a welcomed guise to the Vienna government, fully supported by the government of imperial Germany, for the war declaration to the Serbian kingdom accused of helping to the assassins.

Attempts of T. G. Masaryk to mediate between Vienna and Belgrade, where he was treated in a very friendly way and was accepted with trust, remained successless. The ultimatum of the Vienna government set to Serbia represented the first diplomatic act openly aiming at starting a war, which soon grew into the world war, which contributed to the fall of Austria-Hungary, and by coincidence it helped to find the way to the establishment of the autonomous Czech state.

Against the War

A vast majority of the Czechs had a negative attitude to the started war and their sympathies were on the side of heroically fighting Serbs instead of being on the side of their Habsburg “motherland”. Mostly Czech soldiers sent to the front reflected it in the most expressive way as they, on the contrary of German soldiers leaving for the war with victorious fanphares, did not show any marks of excitement to sacrifice their lives for the emperor. The official press accused them from cowardeness; however, on the contrary, it was a proof of their national awareness and persuasion. Many of them confirmed it on the front later, when they voluntarily desertation to Russian or Serbian captivity.

Only a small group of the Czech political representation expressly decided for a refusing attitude to the ruling politics. A secret associa-

tion was created under the name “Maffia”, of which members believed that Austria-Hungary would loose in the war; and that’s why they were ready to work for this. The beginning of the war thus did not mark that the war would end soon but the analysis of the international situation showed that the dominancy would gradually shift to the side of the Triple Entente and its victory would bring freedom and independence to the Czech nation.

It was not easy to declare off the political orientation for modernisation of Austria going on from Palacký and to set onto the way of its destruction. However, a serious analysis of the international situation showed that internal disputes of Austria-Hungary reached such measures that it was not possible to expect other end. Fight for a free and independent Czech state was the only possible solution for such situation.

When the main representatives of the Czech revolt established the National Council abroad, the most significant was the matter of fact that they set the creation of a common state of the Czechs and the Slovaks as their goal, what was much more complicated than the effort to free the Czech kingdom from the Habsbug monarchy’s dominancy. T. G. Masaryk, fully supported by a Slovak, M. R. Štefánik, was the main initiator of this step, who realized from the beginning that the war would represent a difficult fight not only in fronts but also that its result would bring many fundamental changes on the map of Europe.

At the first sight it may seem that the Czechs could not bring anything crucial in the military aims of the agreements, on of which side the Czechoslovak National Council expressly stood and gradually it gained its trust and also support in the diplomatic front. When T. G. Masaryk was appointed the professor at the University of London in the beginning of the war, he presented an obligatory entry discourse on the topic “The problem of small nations in the european crisis”.

It is possible to imagine well that Great Powers’ governments could only hardly deal with the problematics of small nations in their reflections on aims of the war. However, it cannot be excluded that the Masaryk’s explanation, well thought and in the end positively evaluated, could remind to present British representatives not only the complicated problem of Serbia and Balkans but also the one of Ireland and some small states on the continent, which were pulled into the war. Relatively soon, when one started to negotiate diplomatically and

fighting parties were pushed, with the USA at the forefront of the neutral ones, to publish their war plans, problems of smaller states and till then unfree nations, and the Czechs and the Slovaks among them, were not missing in the document of the Triple Entente.

The Revolt

The national freeing fight had been considered as a recognized factor of the international political development for longer time and it was not possible to think that it would not reflect into war happenings. Declaration of the right of nations for self-determination was one of the war experiences, which caused many changes on the map of Europe within war treaties after the war.

International position of the Czechoslovak National Council was not easy, even though its leaders - Masaryk, Štefánik and Beneš, managed relatively soon to gain its recognition as of a representative of the Czechs and the Slovaks aiming for an independent state. They could not count with any significant support from home because of the threat of a police intervention against rebels in the home front, as well as because of caution of some politicians. On the contrary, Czechoslovak legionaries fighting in France represented a significant help, most of them were in Russia and later in Italy, and the Czechoslovak representation stopped to be only a fighter in the diplomatic field, but it had also its own army and could be recognized as an “ally leading the war”. In this way, Czechoslovak legionaries helped the Czechoslovak National Council significantly, as they knew exactly, what they were fighting for. They acquitted on all fronts not only by their bravery but also with their discipline and ability to improvise, what was very important especially in Russia, vexed by complicated revolutionary shocks.

According to directives of the Czechoslovak National Council, legions in Russia were supposed to stay absolutely neutral in the extremely complicated and unclear situation in 1918. It was not their fault that they were involved in fights but finally justness of the political orientation of their leadership was confirmed, as the interventionist politics failed soon.

A big international conference in Genova in 1922, seeking a solution from the absurd situation, confirmed justness of the Czechoslovak attitude. In the eve, the Czechoslovak president and the government addressed to it incentives, which showed to be the right ones again; even if one did not manage to make them totally dominant.

Diplomatic recognition of Czechoslovakia already in the eve of the end of the First World War represented a big success of the revolt abroad and, at the same time, it represented an award of qualities of the temporary Czechoslovak government in the diplomatic field. It required a maximum effort from all its members, at that time connected with difficult travelling not only through Europe but also in Siberia and America.

Despite of this, these supporters of the Czechoslovak issue abroad managed to elaborate not only basic elements of the future Czechoslovak foreign policy's focus, but also to prepare an idea frame of the future political organization of the new state. The "Declaration of Independence" from the 18th of October 1918, known as the Washington declaration according to the place, containing basic ideas of the afterwar constitutional order in the new independent state, for sure belongs to the most democratic documents of that period. The new state was supposed to become a republic, even though monarchies had been dominant in the world till then. One counted with the respect of human rights as was the general and equal voting right for men and women including the referendum, relative representation and equal rights of minorities, guarantee for the right to assemble and petition, freedom of press, social and economic reforms and realization of other democratic principles.

The chairman of the Czechoslovak National Council, T. G. Masaryk, was the author of the text and thus it was logical that after his return to the freed homeland, he was elected the first president of the newly created Czechoslovak republic on the end of 1918.

Czechoslovakia

Overtaking of power in Prague on October 28, 1918, passed very democratically, when, after a calm demonstration on the Václavské square, the National Committee, of which some members had already been participating at preparations of the composition of the newly born Czechoslovakia's new government in Geneva. Imperial officers and governors respected the change of situation in Prague and they transferred the control over the situation and the administration of the city to representatives of the National Committee. Also overtaking of power in other Czech cities, cities in Moravia and in Silesia passed similarly peacefully.

Even if the after-war order in Europe set by the Versailles conference is often and differently criticised, peace treaties, which, in the framework of the international law, embedded the status of the new state - the Czechoslovak republic - represented a benefit not only for the Czechs and the Slovaks but they as a whole belonged mostly to the positives brought by the peace conference in Europe. Czechoslovakia was generally recognized as a stabilisation factor of the European politics and not by accident it was named a democratic island in the centre of Europe by the international press.

As usually, the Czechs tried to solve everything very fairly and consistently and thus all aristocratic titles were abolished as there was supposed to be the equality of all citizens with no exemptions within the law there. A certain element of revolutionarity was surviving in this decision, however, also the traditional disbelief towards the aristocracy in Czech lands, of which major majority was leaning on the Habsburg dynasty in the last period, remained, except of some exceptions, ignorant to national requirements of the Czech nation, and by this it was excluding itself from its big part's point of view.

Also the land reform, aiming at changes in the countryside, was elaborated at the same time as the democratic constitution, which was supposed to strengthen the small- and medium-sized farmers economically and politically and to limit the influence of landowners. That, of course, regarded also the aristocracy, which represented squires, and which was the owner of forests, ponds and agricultural land in its vast majority. The land reform, however, left a cardinal part of their property to aristocrats, so they could keep their large family residences, which belonged to the cultural heritage with a nationwide significance.

It used to be reported on Czechoslovakia, regarding its democratic character, also as on an asylum for emigrants from surrounding non-democratic states. Because it was shown again that the national awareness was bringing very positive fruits if it was connected with the society's democratic organisation, on the other hand it could become, as nationalism, an idea weapon of the expansionist politics of authoritative regimes.

The idea of the "central-European democratic union", which T.G.Masaryk prepared together with emigrants from the central-European countries in the USA in the end of the war, and which he proposed to president Wilson in their forefront, was not realised. National awareness of many new central-European states was growing into nationalism and within these conditions, the idea of a democratic union could not be realised. Modification of borders by peace treaties were not without any errors and thus instead of old tensions, new friction-areas and places of new conflicts were appearing in Europe.

The Czechoslovak Diplomacy

Diplomacy of the newly built state was well aware of complication of duties in newly created Europe but, at the same time, it could continue in significant diplomatic successes of the revolt abroad. One did not manage to realise "the central-European democratic union" as a model of new cooperation in central Europe because nationalism endangering the fragile peace became dominant against democratic ideas in many countries of central Europe.

Security of borders automatically became the first duty of the Czechoslovak foreign policy and that's why in central Europe, it concentrated on cooperation on newly created Yugoslavia (originally the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians) and Romania, threatened mostly by revisionism of neighbouring Hungary's governments focused against the Trainon Peace Treaty.

The first steps of Czechoslovakia with Yugoslavia and Romania thus lead more into the military realm even though one counted with all-party cooperation in a long term. The "Small Entente", as Hungarian press called these treaties derisively, soon became a welcomed and recognized diplomatic partner in the European politics. The political cooperation of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania was expanding meaningfully in the international forum with

the goal to ensure peace and security in Europe. At the same time, one began to search for ways towards deepening the economic cooperation of the three allies as of a higher supranational entity.

The question of a state security is situated massively in the forefront in the conception of each state's foreign policy. The Czechoslovak diplomacy followed up war experiences and it was well aware of the link between the security of Czechoslovakia and the security of all Europe. That's why from the beginning it was actively involved in the "League of Nations", an international organization that was supposed to search for ways to secure peace in the whole continent within peace treaties. Czechoslovakia, as a state, registered very gravely in a way significantly exceeding its size.

Except of the international organization, the state security was supposed to be ensured also by allied treaties. In the war period, France was the country, which usually first supported efforts of the Czechoslovak National Council for emancipation and creation of an independent state and thus one counted with it as with first of all. However, Czechoslovakia could not fully follow the tough politics of France against defeated Germany, which remained the most significant direct neighbour of Czechoslovakia, with which thus it was needed to keep good relations and mutually advantageous way of cooperation. From this reason, the allied treaty with France was signed only in the half of the 1920th, when one started to search for new ways of cooperation of European nations.

From the very beginning, the Czechoslovak government took care of good neighbour relations with Austria including overcoming of various previous not good experiences. President Masaryk was helping it significantly, based on good relations with many significant politicians of new Austria already from pre-war period. Prague even helped to ensure foods and coal for Vienna during the first winter, when its citizens missed all this. Mutual relations were gradually contractually modified and thus they strengthened basics of good neighbour relations.

Relations with newly created Poland were in the very beginning harmed by a conflict over borders, which finally Great Powers solved by adoption of a compromise proposal of the Czechoslovak government. Various attempts of the Czechoslovak diplomacy for improvement of mutual relations were striking ignorance of the Polish government especially after marshal Józef Piłsudski got into the forefront of the authoritarian regime.

Also Czechoslovak-Hungarian relations were only hardly overcoming a conflict, which marked the establishment of both new states straight after the war. Hungarian governmental functionaries did not want to cope with very tough conditions of the peace treaty and only the decisive diplomatic and also even an armed pressure of Great Powers forced Hungary to respect them. Twice it came also to an attempt to install the former Austria-Hungarian emperor Carl I. on the vacant Hungarian throne, which let himself to be crowned the Hungarian king already during the war, and thus to make a step towards reconstruction of the monarchy of the Saint-Stephen's crown in the pre-war extension. That all was confirming the alliance's justification and justification of the cooperation of the Small Entente's member states.

Nations and Nationalities in Czechoslovakia

The Versailles conference decided, respecting the wish of the concerned population, to annex Ruthenia to the common state of the Czechs and the Slovaks. By this, conditions for democratic evolution and gradual incorporation into an economically far more developed state entity were opened for this part of Europe. Czechoslovakia thus got a direct border with Romania and their relations were practically with no problems, as it regarded two allied states.

The League of Nations was also, besides its duty to ensure peace, in charge of the control over fulfilment of obligations, which new states contractually agreed to respect rights of minorities living in their territory. Also Czechoslovakia was one of them and the Czechoslovak government was fulfilling its obligations as one of the best ones according to regular evaluations, which this international organization was publishing on this matter. The fact that representatives of the biggest minority, the German one, had got into the Czechoslovak government already on the eighth year of the new state's existence, represents a clear prove of that.

However, the situation in Czechoslovakia was not easy. Neither in Czech lands, nor in Slovakia national minorities lived separated one from each other, but densely mixed; and thus it was not possible to make even administrative borders respecting different languages within the administrative dealing. Moreover, a large number of mixed marriages existed here, as a result of a long-term and often uncompli-

cated cohabitation of various nationalities. Czechoslovakia was established as a common state of the Czechs and the Slovaks but at that time still many thought that in reality it regarded one nation, of which parts were different in languages due to different conditions in Czech lands and in Hungaria. It seemed to be very probable in conditions of existence of many dialects in individual parts of the country. The term “Czechoslovak” was adopted in the republic only very slowly, however, on the contrary, such term of a new state was accepted with no problems in international relations.

The example of Switzerland was mentioned often, where French, Italian and German citizens felt to be citizens of a common state, Switzerland. That was, however, a result of a long common evolution and cooperation; and many in Czechoslovakia hoped that if citizens of a new state get at least half a century of time, they could learn to live together and to cooperate.

Thanks to the Magyarizing policy of Hungarian governments, the Slovaks did not have enough of their own intelligence and thus after the creation of Czechoslovakia, many of Czech experts were leaving to Slovakia to help to ensure functioning of various offices, courts, transport, post and others. Also teachers helped to ensure functioning of schools from elementary ones to a university, which was newly established in Bratislava as well as other universities were.

The German minority was the most numerous one and its members had the same rights as the Czech and the Slovak majority had. Already after eight years, one managed that its representatives became members of the common government and they participated at administration of the country. An considerable Hungarian minority lived in the south of Slovakia, of which living conditions on relatively fertile part of the land were better in many ways than in neighbouring Hungary and thanks to the democratic organization, those people had much better conditions for education and self-realization than in the obsolete regime in Hungary.

The government had to solve many problems in the economic field. Czech lands was the most prosperous part of Austria-Hungary and then the Czech industry had to cope with the loss of a big market of the Habsburg Empire and to search for new possibilities for self-assertion in markets of other countries, even in other continents. Czechoslovakia was a state with a large foreign trade including ensuring of important raw materials' imports and it had to face a difficult competition everywhere. The foreign policy thus had a significant economic dimension, to which it had to pay a significant attention.

The European Dimension of the Czechoslovak Diplomacy

However, searching for the ensurance of the new state's security was the main duty of the Czechoslovak diplomacy. That's why it represented a significant appreciation for acitivities of Czechoslovakia in this matter, when its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš, became the reporter general of an important committee for security affairs in the League of Nations, of which chairmanship the French prime minister and the British prime minister were co-presidents. "The Protocol on Peaceful Solving of Problems", often called as the "Geneva protocol", prepared by the committee, based on three principles: arbitrage, security and disarmament; it was adopted by the plenary of the League of Nations unanimously but later it failed on newly elected British House of Representatives, which refused to ratify it. The principle of collective security, based on the three principles remained the basic cornerstone for all following negotiations on security matters and that in the League of Nations as well as later in the United Nations Organisation.

On the conference in Locarno, the Great Britain enforced securing the western border of Germany and Belgium and France on the "Rhine Guarantee Pact" following its politics "divide and rule". However, at the same time, it came also to weakening of the international position of France and, on the contrary, to strengthening Italy as guaranty of the treaty to an European Great Power and the conference made it possible for Germany to become a full member of international negotiations first time after the war.

At the conference, Czechoslovakia with Germany signed only an arbitral treaty not guaranteeing Czech-German borders, however, the Czech-French Guarantee Treaty also agreed in Locarno, on the contrary, had not been included into documents of this conference anymore.

Celebrations of the first decade of the Czechoslovak republic confirmed the political stability of the new state and also its successful economic incorporation in the international criteria. Moreover, Prague was still more becoming an appreciated and attractive cultural centre of Europe. It was in line with the description of Czechoslovakia as a democratic island in the centre of Europe.

Except of others, it showed up when one began to talk about possibilities of its unification based on the international movement the “Panevropa” (the “Paneeurope”), of which iniciator, Earl Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, originating from Poběžovica at Domažlice was. Journalists were thus asking him and many other politicians and cultural personalities; and they often critically stressed that it would not be possible to find an eligible person for the presidential function for united Europe. Probably it was no accident that many, and the Irish writer G. B. Shaw among them, absolutely supported T. G. Masaryk despite his famous scepticism and ironism.

The Czechs and the Economic Crisis

However, it did not take long and all the world was hit by the world economic crisis, which did not avoid either Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia, as a rather small state, could not significantly influence the economic situation in the world. The government was trying to eliminate social impacts on the working ones but the situation was still getting worse. It was interesting that, on the contrary with the statement of the stalinistic leadership of the Communistic International on social democracy as on socialfacists, workers’ strike fights in Czechoslovakia were often lead by common action committees of communists, social democrats and national socialists. Mostly workers with no regard to their nationality, Czechs and Germans together, took part at strike actions.

However, the crisis brought with it also political impacts, threat of facism in many European states and growing tention on the international scene. That’s why the Czechoslovak government meaningfully made efforts to overcome the worse impacts of the economic crisis on the social realm also by an effort for cooperation mostly with its allies in the international criteria.

Smaller states were much more exposed to the crisis and that’s why the Czechoslovak government initiated broadening of the Small Entente’s alliance also into the economic realm and that by an idea of an Economic Small Entente, which was trying to strengthen the unity of its three members by new alliance treaties. In February 1933, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania signed a “Pact of Organisation”, which created some kind of a higher international entity from

them. These states had three votes by common activity in the League of Nations and that made from them a more interesting partner for many negotiations than if they had acted individually.

In the same period, Adolf Hitler got to power in Germany and the situation in Europe changed dramatically. Fascistic states were breaking the international law more and many Great Powers tolerated it. The Small Entente as a fruit of the international law was losing its meaning in the new period of its ignorance. However, Czechoslovakia remained one of the most consistent defenders of the League of Nations' activity and of respect of the international law.

It is remarkable that the idea of a three-member supranational entity appeared in the European politics again in the end of the Second World War, when Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands signed first agreements on cooperation as Benelux in 1944, what made it possible for them to play a bigger role in the international politics and to influence significantly also later in the European integration process. And a half century later, Benelux was helping at enlargement of the European Union by other European states, mainly by the smaller ones, which had already cooperated within the Visegrad group.

The economic crisis of the 1930^s mirrored into relations of the Czechs and the Slovaks seriously. Mainly less developed areas were affected in Czechoslovakia as well as anywhere else and that touched many cities in Slovakia very strongly, as it was not possible to overcome its economic lagging behind from the period of being part of Hungary in the short period of existence of the common republic. Some clerical circles tried to use the dissatisfaction for creation of religious riots in Slovakia as they did not lie about the too secular character of the Czechoslovak state.

The government was somehow trying to calm the situation down, except of others, also by transferring Czech public clerics, which were helping to build the public administration in Slovakia but also school system, transport, post offices etc., back to Bohemia and by this to free posts for the growing new Slovak intellectuals.

In some cases these people were touched and that was negatively reflected in their next relations towards Slovakia, however, anti-slovak attitudes did not dominate within the Czech public.

However, also the fact is interesting that most of the new young Slovak intellectuals not only did not forget its teachers on various school levels but it also stayed loyal to the idea of Czechoslovakia. In

the period of formation of fascism in many European states, luckily only a small part of the Slovak intellectuals got under the influence of nationalism, however a majority accepted democratic principles, on which the political life in Czechoslovakia was based on. Only in the period of “Henlein” attacks against Czechoslovakia, a part let itself to be spellbound by the wave of nationalism.

For a Collective Security

The Czechs totally expressly understood long-term goals of Hitlerism and thus they were encouraging Europe to a common progress of all democratic forces for the defence of peace and against the aggressor of the war. A majority of the European public did not realise the pending danger, however, ruling classes of many European countries knew well that most of the steps of Hitler’s Germany was concentrated mainly at the new war’s preparation, which could change the map of Europe and expose the continent to the fascist dominancy.

It is interesting that working organizations aiming at a common “peoples’ front” against fascism, which was supported by the Communist International, took the right message from Hitler’s getting to power in Germany. In France and in Spain, the left-wing even won elections with such a program; and also at the election of Masaryk’s successor in Czechoslovakia, it came to a creation of a unified democratic left-wing including communists supporting Edvard Beneš.

Plans for changing the map of Europe endangered mostly France, the winner of the First World War. Also Czechoslovakia was grateful to the peace treaties for its establishment and thus it belonged to supporters of French idea of the “Eastern pact”, which, in the sense of Locarno agreements securing western borders of Germany, was supposed to give the same guarantee also to its eastern borders.

Also the Soviet Union was involved in relatively complicated negotiations, which started to support peace actions starting by the Briand-Kellogg Pact and at the half of 1930s that time it negotiated its membership in the League of Nations. However, for many European countries, the anti-sovietism further remained as a serious obstacle in thoughts about a possibility for at least a diplomatic cooperation with it.

The Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš, at that time situated in a front post in the League of Nations, played an

important role in diplomatic negotiations on the Eastern pact, of which role changed soon, and which was supposed to become a treaty on mutual help of all members based on the principle of a collective security. Hitler managed in a smart way to get support from the Great Britain fearing from a too fast growth of France's significance in the European politics, as well as from absolutely anti-Soviet orientated Poland.

Finally, only the French-Soviet alliance and the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance treaty amended by an older similar Czechoslovak-French treaty remained from the big plan as a torso of a courageous peace plan. To include all peaceful forces into a common front against a possible aggressor was also a goal of the League of Nations, where, however, one managed to agree only on a definition of an aggressive act and that at an active participation of Czechoslovakia; however not even this was ratified by all members.

One did not manage to find needed unity in the complicated international situation in the second half of the 1930's in the last century; and, on the contrary, the politics of neutrality in the civil war in Spain and the politics of reconciliation of the aggressor dominated, when Hitler started to fulfil his expansionist plans and skilfully provoked a crisis on Czechoslovakia. That's why on the conference of four super-powers in Munich, he could reach everything he required.

Paralysis of Czechoslovakia

After the "Anschluss" of German speaking Austria, where a considerable part of the population welcomed its incorporation as of an "Eastern Mark" into Hitler's Third empire, the nacist expansion was concentrated at other goal, which Czechoslovakia represented. Hitler realised that though he could dominate the German speaking minority, he also knew that he would find no ally for collaboration within the ruling class there.

On the other side, he knew well that the Great Britain and France extremely fear from a war and they were ready for far-reaching concessions just to avoid a war collision. He knew that until his war plans would be directed only at the east and it would be possible to satisfy them at the expense of someone else, a big hope to make an agreement with both of the Great Powers existed.

He tried to offer a solution to both of the Great Powers generally and thus he was reminding anti-communism in his speeches and stressing that Europe had to choose between him and President Beneš. Moreover, he could rely on his ally, fascistic Italy, always willing to support Germany if it at least strengthened its international authority and prestige.

That's why one managed to organize a conference of four Great Powers, France, Italy, Germany and Great Britain, from a formal Italian initiative, to Munich in September 1938, where Czechoslovakia, an European state recognized as a democratic island in its centre, was in the sense of the appeasement policy (conciliation of an aggressor) diplomatically raped; and then, breaking the international law, some of his parts were occupied militarily and annexed to the Third Empire.

However, the nacist leader was not satisfied with this, as Czecho-Slovakia - how the deformed state was called at that time - had still not been under his absolute control because till then it had a diplomatic connection with the world. At that time, nacists managed to provoke a bigger separatistic movement in Slovakia, which was supposed to represent a similar guise for an intervention in Slovakia as was the separatistic movement of Germans in the Czech and Moravian border area in 1938.

However, not even an absolute obedience of the Slovaks prevented Hitler, acting like their protector, not to enforce - by a decision of Italian and German minister of foreign affairs at their November meeting in Vienna, however already without ministers of foreign affairs of France and Great Britain - transfer of Slovakia to Hungary as the Czech and Moravian border area was transferred to Germany after the Munich dictate.

In spring 1939, Hitler already did not make any effort to cover his aggressive steps somehow diplomatically and he ordered the leader of the major Slovak People's Party, Jozef Tiso, straight during his audience in Berlin, to declare an independent Slovak state under the German protection at the Slovak Council; what really happened.

And the day after, he received the president of Czecho-Slovakia, JUDr. Emil Hácha and he announced him that Bohemia would be occupied by the German army as from the next day and he forced him to order Czech soldiers not to resist to German forces. At the same time, by threatening about bombarding Prague, he forced the president to require the leader to accept Czech lands under his protection

with no regards on the fact that their citizens did not speak German. On March 15, 1939, it came to a military occupation of the rest of Czecho-Slovakia by the German army and one day after, the protectorate with a German protector in its forefront was declared.

The Great Britain and France, offering guarantees for rests of Czecho-Slovakia at the Munich conference, limited their activities on protest notes, which Hitler ignored. He did not make it secret that he considered international documents with his signature as useless pieces of paper. The Soviet Union delivered the only consistent and by international law justified protest at a meeting of the League of Nations at that time.

The protest of the former Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš was absolutely not accepted at the League of Nations' negotiations, as it was delivered by a private person. Only when the Soviet delegation accepted it, it was decided to incorporate it to the following negotiation of this international organization, which was supposed to be held in autumn 1939. However, it did not come to it because Hitler began the new world war with the attack on Poland.

Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

The result of the occupation of Czech lands was totally clear for their population: it was necessary to search for ways how to get rid of it. From the beginning, most of the inhabitants understood that Hitler's Germany was preparing the war and was convinced not only about that it would come to it soon but it also believed that it would finally bring the freedom despite first Nazi successes and still have been convinced about the temporariness of the protectorate.

Formal keeping of JUDr. Emil Hácha as the "state president" in the forefront of the protectorate and appointment of the former German Minister of Foreign Affairs Konstantin von Neurath the protector represented a calming gesture towards the world, even though it was totally unacceptable according to the international law. Citizens totally realised the real state of matters, thus the puppet show of the president, which had no competences.

It was remarkable that, on the contrary, citizens considered the building of the "protectorate government" with Ing. Alois Eliáš, a former Czechoslovak general, in its forefront as an attempt of a part of patri-

ots to face the worse. Generally it was understood that he has secret links with persons in the revolt abroad, which was gradually forming in France and Great Britain, and to which forefront the former Czechoslovak president Edvard Benes, still considered as a justified head of state by a large part of the public, finally got.

Though the destruction of Czechoslovakia remained almost with no reaction from the European public, the bloody intervention against Czech university students on the 17th of November 1939 provoked an exceptional reaction in the world. Closing of Czech universities, killing of tens of student movement's representatives and transfer of a majority of students to a concentration camp clearly showed the face of the nazi occupation. During few years, this date became a symbol of the international university movement, of which influence is always absolutely exceptional in every country. The student revolt in the protectorate gained not only sympathies of the world public but also students from all around the world followed it up; what was confirming the reference of the Czechs to other Europeans.

Many organizations of patriots willing to help the nascent home revolt were established in the protectorate; however, mostly they were not secret enough to prevent the Gestapo from detecting them. Only gradually, and often only after many victims, the revolt started to learn more eligible forms of secrecy. Only few rebels, whose existence had to be secured by more individuals, could live in full illegality in Protectorate.

Most of the persons involved in revolt organisations had to have a legal civil working post or a working position; and connecting both of the activities had almost never been easy. Creation of revolt groups was very valuable there, from where it was possible to gain various precious informations for the revolt abroad. It was necessary to cover this form of revolt against the occupational regime by certain tolerance of such persons to the regime, even tough it could sometimes seem almost as collaboration with occupants.

Most of the population probably wished to survive with no harm. First years of occupation did not give any hope for its soon ending and thus the home revolt had also an important role - to keep the morality of citizens and to face various forms of defeat. Many of Czech social, cultural and sport organizations and clubs offered possibilities to maintain the national awareness in this sense and sometimes also space for covering of the revolt activity.

Cultural activity of the Czech society helped to retain patriotic feeling and national awareness through problems caused by pressure of the censure but often also by not expected and totally nonsense control interventions of various institutions and organizations. Even in the period of occupation, thinking and evaluation of the first republic and its acting did not stop and opinions on possibilities of improvement of the state system and its enhancement after the war were formed.

It is necessary to realize that tiredness of the occupational regime was growing with each year and in comparison with other European nations; the period of the Czech occupation was the longest one. Regarding this, relatively few “open” collaborators appeared. A bigger percentage of them was concentrated probably only into the capital, into various offices; however, if one knew about them, they stayed out of the Czech society.

Insufficient secrecy and airiness of the patriotic feeling of a big part of citizens made it easier for the Gestapo to permeate into revolt organizations and to punish their activity in a tough way. It came to various local reports in the countryside but many times it regarded a so called economic criminality, thus it concerned black market with agricultural products or local envy and hate, however, conscious collaboration did not become of a mass character.

For Freedom of Czechoslovakia

Duties of the revolt abroad were exceptionally big and complicated in the international forum. From the international law's point of view, the status of Czechoslovakia was totally specific. It was not a defeated state as the other ones, which were in the war status with Germany before the occupation; moreover, in its territory the Slovak state existed, with which some states had relations in various levels, also diplomatic ones.

Moreover, a government with a former Czechoslovak general in its forefront worked in the protectorate, however, with no international recognition. The effort for an eventual diplomatic recognition of the exile Czechoslovak government abroad moreover forced especially the British and the French governments to modify somehow their political attitudes from the period of the Munich dictate; and that no government likes to do.

It is necessary to thank abilities and endurance of the Czechoslovak exile government for that it finally managed to get a partial recognition in 1940, in what Czechoslovak soldiers had merit by their brisk performance already in France and then during the defence of Tobruk in Cyrenaica, where a force from the Middle east was fighting. In Great Britain, the main merit belongs to pilots, who scored by their performance in the air battle over England.

Only the USSR's entry into the war in 1941, its definite attitude in the Czechoslovak issue and the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition brought full and equal diplomatic status of the Czechoslovak republic from other allies. Gradually, the government managed to enforce the invalidity of the Munich conference's results, which, together with participation at documents of the United Nations from the beginning, extremely helped to make the international legal situation of Czechoslovakia after the war easier.

A successful attempt of the Czechoslovak soldiers' parachute force from the Great Britain on the Deputy Protector, Reinhard Heydrich, had a big feedback in Europe. Burning of the village Lidice and little later burning of Ležáky, as a payback for this attempt, created a huge uproar in the world. Nazi occupation showed its true face, when its SS forces behaved in the occupied country as on the front in Russia, what a quite big part of the European public did not want to believe till then.

The Czechoslovak revolt thus very significantly participated at the European and the world public's awareness that the war was lead against a totally barbaric and inhuman enemy, with which no agreement was possible. That was contributing to the awareness of the necessity to create an anti-Hitler coalition of all democratic forces as the only way towards the end of the world war. Declaration of the United Nations from the 1st of January 1942 was the first act of this politics.

Czechoslovakia was among first signers and its diplomacy was actively participating at all further steps of building an international organization called the United Nations. At the same time it could be based on rich experiences of its activity in its predecessor, the League of Nations.

Establishment and beginning of activity of such a big international organization always requires some time after its creation. That's why, at the same time, president Beneš initiated a negotiation on ally treaties with principal states borning from the anti-Hitler coalition, especially USSR, USA and Great Britain, when Czechoslovak diplomacy

had been closely working with the gaullistic leadership of the Free France for many years. For free Czechoslovakia it was supposed to represent a guarantee for its security and peace till the new international organization started to work.

Negotiations were not easy. The US government had not negotiated ally treaties for the peace period till then; however, the US president agreed that Czechoslovakia would make efforts to sign treaties on mutual help with other allies within the anti-Hitler coalition. The British government was of the opinion that similar treaties were supposed to be signed only after the war and thus negotiations began only with the Soviet government and the treaty with the USSR on mutual help and after-war cooperation was signed on the 12th of December 1943.

General de Gaulle, whose movement declared the Munich dictate as not valid, very much welcomed this step towards strengthening the alliance of members of the anti-Hitler coalition in the name of France. At the same time, he marked president Beneš as a “big European”, which understood the European politics right already before the war and at that time he was trying to complement the politics of the “Big Three” in the European region. One year later, Gaulle himself signed a similar allied treaty with the Soviet Union on behalf of France and thus he confirmed that this politics was in the national interest of these states.

During the Second World War, the anti-Hitler coalition had into certain extent represented the fulfilment of conceptions of the Czechoslovak diplomacy from already the eve of the war. It was not an accident that the idea of the collective security, at of which preparation the Czechoslovak diplomacy participated so actively, became the central idea of the “United Nations” of the new international organization, which was supposed to overtake duties of the League of Nations in the effort to secure the international peace and security.

The Renovation of Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia was the the first victim and Prague was the last capital that was freed in the end of the war. Also this expressly confirmed the connection of the Czechs with the destiny of whole Europe.

The Czechoslovak revolt abroad and home cooperated very closely. Also the Slovak National Uprising confirmed it, which freely and expressly supported the reconstruction of the common Czechoslovak state. Not in all occupied states one managed to keep the unity of the revolt home and abroad, which the conference of the “Big Three” in Jalta on Krym had to solve, preparing a Declaration on free Europe in the beginning of 1945.

The reconstruction of Czechoslovakia was not a problem from the international law’s point of view; it represented a state internationally and expressly recognized, thus it could become a founding member of all international organizations created within the United Nations.

A decision of the “Big Three” in Postupim on departure of the German minority from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland was enormously important for the future of Czechoslovakia. One discussed this issue in the international forum already during the war, as German minorities played an important role in one of the starters of the Second World War. Resolution on their transfer to Germany thus represented an effort of Great powers to remove possible new sources of conflicts and to strengthen peace and security of Europe.

Czechoslovakia absolutely logically accepted this decision after experiences from the eve of the war. The government immediately intervened against a “wild transfer”, locally and spontaneously realized and marked by misdemeanours reflecting the war suffering and started to prepare a whole state-properly organized removal. That had to be coordinated with ally bodies in occupied Germany and soon after it was realized and these bodies expressed their recognition to the Czechoslovak government for its very good organization.

The war, anyway as usually, provoked significant social vibrations and most of European states decided to build their new state organizations based on democratic principles after experiences with the Nazi occupation. Czechoslovakia had an advantage in that there was a full harmony in conceptions of the revolt abroad and at home and, moreover, it could follow the pre-war period very well.

President Beneš drew the attention to it already in his book “Democracy today and tomorrow”, of which first edition was published already during the war and he made the conclusion that one would have to extend democracy from the political realm also to economic sphere, social problematics, nationality matters and to all parts of cul-

ture and that in a “socializing” sense. Regarding the fact that its activity aims at freeing a man and at securing his better future, it should be the “humanistic democracy”. Exactly in this he followed his predecessor, T. G. Masaryk who respected humanistic ideals in all his activities.

Czechoslovakia decided to become some kind of a link “a bridge between the East and the West” after the war, in the interest of better mutual knowing and also in the interest of securing the world peace. During the war, the anti-Hitler coalition concentrated many states of quite different traditions and social organization into one grouping and thus it was not easy for them to cooperate together with no problems.

Moreover, the war caused, as usually, deep changes not only on the map of Europe but mostly in that the history of this continent stopped to be the history of states but in many ways the development concerned all Europe. President Beneš drew the attention to this also during his speech at the Charles University on December 1945 when he said that we had to search for a new organization of Europe and for forms of its cooperation as a whole in the sense of United Nations’ ideals and ideals of the democratic and humanistic organization of society.

The Czechoslovak public started to search for these new forms within the politics of the National Front on the “Czechoslovak way towards socialism”. However, the after-war and peace euphoria did not have a long lasting. There were many problems on the way of the after-war reconstruction; however, a conviction dominated that by common activities we would manage to overcome the problems. The international politics, however, started to leave the idea of the general cooperation and instead of that the politics of the Cold war resting upon the atomic bomb started to dominate in international relations. That, what no one could imagine during the war, was becoming a fact and instead of peacefully built Europe, a divided continent resulted from it. Bipolarity became the key element of mutual relations in the European politics in the sense of the Cold war as a basic contrary to the idea of general cooperation of whole Europe, which would have been more eligible for it.

In Bipolar Europe

The after-war economic reconstruction of Czechoslovakia reached big successes in first years after the war, however, soon after it was incorporated by the power division of Europe into a block lead by the USSR, what had set conditions and possibilities of its further development in the long-term. The Cold war was creating new rounds of armament, what had to mirror negatively in the living standart of the population.

Growth of the international tension manifested negatively into the internal and also into the foreign politics of Czechoslovakia. Great power blocks were making enormously difficult the situation of small states, which were always more forced to accept the leading role of superpowers standing in their forefront. That's why, for example, Czechoslovakia had to refrain from voting in the UN's plenary in December 1948 at adopting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under the Soviet pressure, it was also forced to denounce the allied treaty signed with Yugoslavia after the war.

Influence of the politics of blocks mirrored not only into international relations but soon it began to act negatively also inside the state. As a result of Soviet advisors' acting in Czechoslovak offices and institutions, in the internal politics, it came to a fundamental breach of traditional democracy and justice including terrible political processes on the breach of the 40s and 50s. They had a significant impact on the whole society and it had lasted for many years till steps towards remedy started to be done.

Economic embargo of the developed West on one side and the necessity of cooperation with the nascent Soviet block on the other side set the national economic politics of Czechoslovakia in the sense of "people's democracy" and "building the socialism" in the long term. Internationally, Czechoslovakia joined the The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, where it helped other less developed member states to overcome the enherited technological and economic lagging behind by its economic forwardendess.

Politically and safety-wise, it was linked with states of the Soviet block and later by its membership in the "Warsaw treaty", it was accessary to the leadig role of the USSR; and according to its directives, it was supposed to act like its satellite in the international politics. Only a very small space was left for the Czecholsovak diplomacy to come up with some more individual initiatives.

Czechoslovakia kept a part of its positive prestige by its active cooperation with some bodies of the United Nations Organization and with most of its associated organizations. Czechoslovak participation at various forms of help to many developing countries within the UNESCO was very valuable, especially in alphabetic campaigns in these countries and by educating their young intelligence at home on the spot and also in Czechoslovakia. In many countries of the “Third World” the Czech medical specialists helped in the framework of the WHO to develop their local health organisation.

As an economically developed state, it participated at the economic aid, which the United Nations organized for developing countries as soon as they freed themselves from the colonial dependence. In the ascent “third world”, the Czechoslovak foreign trade was finding significant possibilities for its realization. The economic cooperation was advantageous for both parties. Czechoslovakia could export its machinery and other products and import needed raw materials, what was freeing developing countries from the dictate of superpowers in the world trade.

Peaceful Coexistence and Reforms

Recess of the Cold War and formation of the Peaceful Coexistence, following Dictator Stalin’s death, opened a bit the door to positive changes inside Czechoslovakia and also in the international environment. Provoked and basically from abroad forced bloody processes of the 1950s had a hard effect on the Czechoslovak public used to democratic orders; however, they strongly struck also the Communist party. Many of its members, convinced about correctness of the socialist democracy, which was supposed to represent the first step towards building the communistic society, started to look for a correction of mistakes made till then.

Innerpolitical reforms were prepared so they would not encounter on the Soviet model too much. Within the collectivization, workers opposed by opinions of a whole village were not dispatched to chairmanship positions in agricultural co-operatives anymore but one was searching among young local farmers for those, which would be able to gain sympathies and support of citizens for the new politics of cohabitation in the countryside and would be able to manage a co-operative. Despite of all mistakes and problems of this route, one mana-

ged to keep and to decrease the life standard of the countryside gradually, what further development fully confirmed and appreciated.

The Czechoslovak agricultural co-operating managed to solve one of the most complicated problems of the agricultural work. Farmers had been always complaining that their work took all days, thus from early mornings till late evenings. Only in unified agricultural co-operatives one started to work in shifts and thus it was possible that one group would use the end of the week for, for example, cultural visits of theatres in cities, turistic holiday or for visiting castles and chateaus and the following week a second group would take holiday. Expert delegations from many European countries were coming to examine this Czechoslovak "invention", as exactly whole week working hours represented a problem, for which the youth in most of European countries was not willing to work in agriculture in the countryside.

At schools, the formation of a new intelligence generation helped to enforce the modernization of education and to improve its quality; however, it was not possible to overcome various negative influences of party institutions. Young teachers, equipped by the party identification, often made efforts to face various nonsenses and they were successful when other forms of protests and boycotts were not bringing expected results.

As usually, bureaucratic nonsenses, based on ideological directives of party functionaries, had the biggest persistence as usually. That complicated the modernization of schools but mostly it was blocking modernization and effectiveness of the state apparatus, which was remaining as the support and the prolonged hand of the questionable party regime.

Only when economic problems confirmed the defectiveness of some methods of management of the national economy, young economists could present the critics of then procedures and to submit proposals on modernization while respecting all economic regularities, which were not taken into account till then. Formulations of proposals were created only in a complicated way not to crash straight after their launch, and one managed to enforce some changes in an even more difficult way or very slowly.

That regarded not only Czechoslovak problems; however also other people's democracies encountered similar problems, sometimes even much bigger. That showed up in autumn 1956, when it came to vigorous happenings in Poland and in Hungary as a result of conclusions of the XXth Council of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 disclosing horrors of Stalin personality's cult. Especially problems with supplies created a big unsatisfaction, which was manifes-

ted in massive demonstrations. Those ended by a basically wise compromise in Poland, while in Hungary they eventuated into a movement, which was about to outgrow into a civil war; and finally the Soviet army suppressed it. Also in Czechoslovakia conclusions of the XXth Council of the CPSU created big debates, however one managed to calm the situation down as problems with supplies were not that big there.

It was a big problem that various reform proposals were not in compliance with the Soviet economic doctrine and that's why they were considered as an attack against the Soviet Union, with which economics of the Soviet block's states were connected very closely. And moreover, implementation of new methods of management of the production was threatening to interfere with principles of the party management and substituting it by expert cadres.

International Detente and Cooperation

The principle of a "peaceful coexistence" brought détente of the international tension, formed by prime ministers of the People's republic of China and India in 1954, two of the most populated countries in the world, "the spirit of Geneva" created by the meeting of four superpowers on the highest level in 1955 and historical conclusions of the XXth Council of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Development of relations among different nations, which were starting to cross also the famous "iron curtain", penetrated into the European politics. Part of the Czech intelligence had the possibility to familiarize with idea streams in Western Europe, where the incoming integration process inspired the birth of the "new left-wing" criticizing the social situation there and interested in changes in eastern part of the continent.

The West-European democratic public supported opposition movements in Poland and Hungary, however, the new left-wing had an eminent interest in ideas of Czechoslovak economic reforms as it was itself searching for the most eligible forms of social links in the western part of Europe. Gradually, slowly and carefully, relations among scientists of whole Europe were developing, which automatically had to lead to mutual influence and cooperation. Clear limits still existed, however, they were becoming relaxed into certain extent and Czechoslovaks were among the most frequent initiators of various relations and cooperation.

Culture always belongs to bridges between nations and music in its forefront, which does not need translators and that's why music meetings and festivals played an important role in efforts for détente. The oldest music festival of post-war Europe, the "Prague spring" with no doubts played an important role in developing of relations not only among musicians but it was remarkable how the international atmosphere influenced also the cooperation of Czech artists with abroad, especially with the most famous ones. Many were arriving to help to smash "the iron curtain" and to support democratization streams in Czechoslovakia. The film festival in Karlove Vary was, however, not so lucky to remain during all the post-war period and for some time, it had to back up to the Moscow festival.

The improving economic and especially supplying situation in Czechoslovakia automatically led also to a general détente of social and political surroundings in the republic. Development of culture, except of music, first of all, a new movie wave including puppet and other movies for children, restoration of the pantomime, inspiring theatre pieces, expositions of creative art, successes of artistic glass manufacturing to finally even extraordinary successes of Czechoslovak pavilions in 1958 at the EXPO in Brussels and in Canadian Montreal in 1967 represented best proof of that.

That attracted the attention of European and world public to Czechoslovakia and confirmed its fundamental link with the evolution in Europe and that far not just the cultural one. Also products with the mark "Made in Czechoslovakia" helped to disseminate the good name and popularity of the country and that all, of course, had a response also in the case of all citizens in the republic and to strengthen their national pride and the courage to contribute to the good name of Czechoslovakia all over the world. National differences between the Czechs and the Slovaks did not mirror in this activity into abroad.

The Czechs and the Slovaks

The relation of two equal nations in the common state was not without any problems at all, basically as how it works among neighbours. It is interesting that problems were appearing more and more significantly in the political area and even straight in the communist party. Czechs, aware of certain bigger development of the western part of the republic, sometimes had a paternalistic approach towards

Slovakia, what the Slovaks, of course, abided badly. The worst was that it mirrored into the highest governmental and party levels into a great extent and thus many of questionable and sensitive issues were postponed and were not solved.

The question of the political administration of the country was principal. The so called socialistic regime, according to the Soviet example, was enforcing an absolute control over everything from the centre and was practically destroying the local self-government, which used to play an enormous role in the national revival; it was also one of the main parts of the democratic organization of the state and, at the same time, an excellent lesson of democracy in practise, what did not suit the centralistic leading of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia.

Local administration bodies elected regularly - however on individual candidate lists adopted in advance - practically did not have any powers and they had to consult even the most common steps with Prague's institutions, only from where they could get necessary finances. The critical attitude to the existing Prague-centrism was getting still stronger and that in whole Czech lands and also in Slovakia. However, there it was strengthened by the national view and if the Czech critics concerned only those political and administration matters, in Slovakia it was getting the national dimension still more expressively.

The fiction of a unified Czechoslovak nation had been history for a long time- officially two nations, the Czech one and the Slovak one were recognized; however, the consistent centralism of the communist party was stopping any development of the self-governance including the respect of nationality. And regarding the totally logical question of a two nations' federation, it encountered the Soviet veto, still living in the image of a possibility to overcome national differences by creation of the "Soviet nation". And the leadership of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia did not have enough courage to stand on the side of the logical evolution and justified requests of the Slovaks in this maturing question.

Critical articles about various problems in the press, jokes and remarks in the radio and television, which the public perceived in a sensitive way, were marking certain détente of the tension in the domestic scene. Creation of various associations and clubs dealing with still growing ecologic problems; complicated local, area and regional matters and also the creation of social organizations was proving democratic

elements enforcing in practise. Creation of special commissions for various social problems within the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and the permission to establish the Czechoslovak Association for Political Sciences and even the establishment of the Institute of Political Sciences at the Central Council of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was proving a broadening space for a free research of social sciences, even though officially the Soviet ideology of the socialistic society's development was still absolutely valid everywhere.

The Prague Spring

The successfully enforcing peaceful coexistence in international relations could not influence the inner-political situation in Czechoslovakia, still proclaimed as a trustful member and a firm part of the Soviet block leant on the Marxism-Leninism by official functions. It was very interesting that the first half-public disruption of this confirmation came from high party levels and that in the national question and had far-reaching impacts for the whole state.

Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in October 1967 did not pass as other former ones, according to a scenario prepared in advance. Usually not only main referats of leading functionaries but also many discussion interventions of members were elaborated in advance, so that it was possible to issue a written report almost immediately after the end of the meeting.

This time, the secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia, Alexander Dubček, criticised the party's politics towards Slovakia. Instead of prepared texts, members started to criticise various aspects of the political situation in the country; and finally the meeting was interrupted and it was decided to continue in it later in order to prepare it better. That, what the public knew or at least felt, appeared and a discussion on all problems started all around the country and it got to the press and to other media.

A big part of programs in radio and on television seemed to be prepared with no intervention of the once almighty censure within the happy leave from the old year 1967. Also the press was getting somehow different image and the global atmosphere was getting relaxed within the society. That's why no one was surprised when the first secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, was removed with no previous agreement from Moscow in first days in 1968 and for the first time it was a Slovak, Alexander Dubček, who overtook this post.

His appointment did not create any protests of Moscow as Novotný was not favoured by the leadership there, due to his critical approach towards the removal of Nikita Chruscov from all functions.

Examples are said to pull, thus there is no wonder that also on lower party levels it came to elections with no orders and no pre-agreement from hierarchically higher posts. None was surprised that they brought significant transfers of members' trust towards some party functionaries. Elements of democracy mirrored from party organizations also to the social life. New compositions of party bodies had bigger understanding for justified requests of the public, what was bringing certain relaxation into the social life and many times it lead to reconstruction of few older associations and to creation of new social organizations with no permission required in advance.

One strated to talk about a "revival process", thus about a correction of former mistakes in the work of the communist party and its bodies and one started to organize correction steps within the "Action Program". Transfers within the composition of party bodies manifested in that Antonín Novotný was removed from the president post due to a wish of the public and general Ludvik Svoboda, a representant of both of the revolts abroad and a symbol of their political concentration's retrieval, was appointed for his function. This change in the leadership of the state made also the change of the government possible, on which the National Assembly was pushing in the sense of peope's requests.

The new government established its activity on ideas of the Action Program and a vast majority of the Czech and the Slovak public welcomed it. Europe marked the happening in Czechoslovakia as the "Prague Spring" and home and foreign media started to speak consistently about "socialism with a human face". Finally one started to search for a way of society's modernisation and that within the socialist orientation with the conviction that socialism is not possible without democracy, of which it is just another continuation and development.

If we relaise that already in the first half of the 1950s unlimited power and police terror ruled the country, it is necessary to appreciate depth and strength of democratic roots, from which the society could stem from and leaning on the search for new forms of the state organization. The revival program was based on Czech society's national democratic traditions, which, however, were mostly missing in such extent in cases of other nations in the Soviet block. It, however, does not mean that these democratic principles would not attract to be copied, as people everywhere are basically always ready to adopt democratic principles of society's management.

The party and state leading bodies of other states of the soviet block totally realised this and that's why media in other socialistic countries were informing, according to their orders, about happenings in Czechoslovakia very critically. Leaderships of communist parties there did not make it secret that they did not agree with the developments in Czechoslovakia and they informed the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia about their critics. The image of a possible positive reaction and probably also of copying of Czechoslovak changes in other socialistic countries was threatening the party and state leaderships there; and thus they warned about the continuation of, as they were saying, the incorrect process.

On the contrary, democratic Europe highly appreciated that the Czechoslovak revival process was not a result of the population's dissatisfaction created only by the lack of supplies, how it was in Poland and Hungary years before, but it regarded searching for modernization of the Czech and the Slovak society in the sense of democratization and national equality. Again, as in 1848 and 1918, it was supposed to come to changes of the society organization and that in a democratic way, leant on a sophisticated program in the sense of humanism.

Prague and into a great extent also all the country were not making to take up those interested ones desiring to know and understand the core of changes in Czechoslovakia and eventually to be inspired by them. It cannot be forgotten that at that time especially students made the critics of the situation in the school system in the Federal Republic of Germany and in France public very openly. Their critic was gaining support of a big part of the public as it basically drew the attention to various other defects of these countries' state organizations.

Intervention and Normalization

The power intervention of five states of the Warsaw Treaty under the leadership of the Soviet Union stopped the revival process in Czechoslovakia; however it did not change thinking of a big part of its population. The new majority in the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia responsibly refused the way of an armed resistance but the public managed to block and many times even to burlesque all the military action in different ways. Occupants and their supporters did not even manage to discover, where the majority of delegates elected for the prepared exceptional meeting of the

Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which was supposed to set following program, secretly met and negotiated. Also these tragic happenings confirmed political and cultural development of the Czechoslovak society, what the European public highly appreciated, as an eventual armed conflict in Czechoslovakia could endanger the peace in whole Europe.

The Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia very much weakened certain credibility of the USSR, which had disarmament in the developing world and in the peace movement as its priority. Moreover, it represented a step, which very strongly touched the international communist movement, till then still, even despite the refusal of a unified party Komintern, strongly linked with the Bolshevik tradition. Big communist parties in Western Europe, grown up from the workers' movement linked with democratic and republican traditions depend their critics of former mistakes and under the term of Eurocommunism, they tried to modernize the international communist movement often by referring to the Czechoslovak attempt for the democratic socialism.

It was especially sad that modernization and democratization of the Czechoslovakia's social organization was not only stopped under the strict soviet control, but also that, what one managed to correct during the Prague spring, was put into its previous state again. However, according to the Soviet example, the consolidated and so called normalized regime got features of a sad farce.

Federalization of Czechoslovakia, which Soviet advisors did not like so much, was the only thing that one managed to realize as certain compromise from the program of the revival process. However, they managed to avoid the Communist party of Czechoslovakia undergoing a reform according to the same example. Thus two socialistic republics, the Czech and the Slovak one, created the socialistic federal state; however, the communist party was the only one, even though some autonomous Communist Party of Slovakia was its part. This proves the existence of absurdities, towards which the so called normalization under the Soviet leading gradually ended up in Czechoslovakia.

From the power point of view, Czechoslovakia was again incorporated among satellites in the Soviet block; however, it kept its good name intelectually and culturally. A significant migration exactly of many excellent representants of culture and science but also a nonsense chasing of many of those significant personalities of political and cul-

tural area, which stayed in the country and which found themselves in lists of enemies of the regime, considerably contributed to it.

The social life in Czechoslovakia started to be basically schizophrenic, as the government was speaking about normalization but most of the population only pretended to adapt to the new situation and into a certain extent it lived in a double way. It did not support the newly installed regime ideologically; however, it did not openly act against it and it resorted to its own perception of life and society. Sometimes it was extremely complicated for the youth learning at school something that was perceived differently at home.

The intellectual life can never be totally scheduled and organized. “Samizdat”, where writers and artists published their opinions and statements unofficially, started to appear very soon, basically according to the Soviet example. Critical articles were disseminated, various petitions were signed and despite of all the police’s effort, the cultural life being beside the state control was developing more and more. According to personal and family conditions a smaller part of the population participated at these activities directly, other ones supported these actions only in a non-public way and other ones sympathized with them and they followed them passively.

The Charter ‘77

The international situation got a new dimension after the “Final Act”, a document obliging all its participants to respect agreed principles of mutual relations, including the respect of human rights, was adopted in Helsinki in the end of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975.

By adoption of the Helsinki Final Act and by additional ratification of both international UN’s pacts on human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights from 1966, which the meeting of communist parties in Berlin in 1976 ordered to communist parties, the Czechoslovak government obliged itself to respect all human rights. A group of dissidents, Czech critics of the present regime used this and in 1976 elaborated a document called the “Charter ‘77”

The document was, in the sense of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialistic Republic, formulated as a warning to the National Assembly on default of these laws on human rights, which it adopted some time ago. It did not regard any laws and it did not create

any anti-state activities in any way; and that's why the State Security tried to restrain from its delivery to the office of the National Assembly in every way. Regarding the fact that at the same time the text was given at the disposal to foreign media and the world was informed about it as well - as about news on actions against its authors, it was not possible to dim or even to falsify its content, so it could have become a reason to a common police pursuit of signataires. And thus one started to search for other ways how to irritate and complicate life of dissidents.

Non-sense of various actions organized against dissidents represented a welcomed material for the foreign broadcasting and thus the Charter was receiving such reactions from the world, which it could never secure by itself. The Charter basically followed all humanitarian and democratic traditions of the Czech society. Three spokesmen and the first three - Václav Havel, Jiří Hájek a Jan Patočka, ranked among internationally most famous Czechoslovak personalities, who annually changed in its forefront.

Thus the world was learning about the attitude of Czechoslovakia towards various political issues not only from government's statements but also from spokesmen of the Charter representing opinions of most of the population, which were not at all the same as opinions of the government. Soon also the Committee on Defence of wrongfully prosecuted was created, keeping the link with the international organization Amnesty International. The international public was getting to know about all lawlessness of the regime in Czechoslovakia very often and into detail.

The Helsinki Peace Process

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe decided in the end to organize its "further meetings", where it would evaluate up till then results of the peace effort and where it would set other principal tasks directly. By that "the Helsinki Peace Process" was launched, which got a significant support from the side of the European integration process, which was bringing détente, strengthening the security feeling and, at the same time, steps towards human rights respect not only into the European politics but also into all international relations.

The Helsinki Watch international movement, making efforts for the defence of human rights, supported dissident movements in central-

European and eastern-European states in the international forum; it was strengthening them and thus it was helping to prepare the ground for principal and surprising changes in 1989. The unexpected ones reached such an extent that they totally changed social standards in many European countries and they contributed not only to changes on the map of Europe but mostly to a fundamental exchange of the political atmosphere on the whole continent.

Changes in the Soviet Union linked with the accession of Michael Gorbatchev into the forefront of the communist party there in 1985 had a decisive role in this process. Perestrojka had, except of economic aspects, also significant political aspects, first of all a bigger political openness with elements of democratization and a new understanding of the foreign policy got a clear human, cultural and all-world dimension.

That all was bringing a significant détente into the international politics and it made changes in member states of the Soviet bloc possible. Changes always passed based on local and often very different conditions in different countries.

In Hungary it was mostly ecologists, who were contributing to political changes following the development of business and economic relations with the West. It even came to fundamental changes in the leadership of the ruling communist party there and certain neutralization of Hungary was prepared.

In Poland the politics of round tables, forced mostly by pressure of the independent union Solidarity, led to the creation of the second chamber of the Senate. It came to a principal change in the government's composition, to which forefront a catholic MP acceded with the support of the Catholic Church, always influential in Poland, moreover leaning on the polish catholic pope.

The biggest international reaction had the historical happening in the German Democratic Republic, where an attempt for celebrations of its 40 year-long existence ended very unsuccessfully. The political regime there, led by the Unified Socialistic Party of Germany, SED, belonged to the most Stalinist ones and even acting against positive Gorbatchev changes in the Soviet Union.

The strengthening opposition movement in the GDR, leaning on the protestant church and requiring a reform of the regime there was, of course, getting support from the second German state, the Federal Republic of Germany. Also its ruling circles came to help citizens of the GDR waiting on borders of Hungary and Austria within their holi-

day till barricades would be removed from these borders and they would be able to travel into the Federal Republic. In a decisive way they helped also to those, which asked for and got the asylum in the FRG embassy in Prague, from where they could freely leave finally to FRG after an agreement of governments of both German states with the Government of Czechoslovakia.

Citizens of both parts of divided Berlin understood the decision of the new government of the GDR to relax relations between both parts of divided Germany into certain extent already before its public declaration as a signal for removal of the hated Berlin wall. Spontaneous actions for its demolition on the 9th of November were so massive that the government and neither police forces of the GDR did not dare to intervene against them in any way. The fall of the Berlin wall thus became a symbol of historical changes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989.

The Velvet Revolution

In Czechoslovakia, a tough intervention of police against an officially allowed student demonstration at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the closure of czech univerities by nazi on the 17th of November 1939 became an incentive for far-reaching changes. Already desintegrating regime lead by the Communist Party of Czecholslovakia did not dare to intervene against the indignant broad public.

The Civic forum, with Václav Havel in the forefront, popular mostly abroad, stood in the forefront of various protests and demonstrations. Also representants of the government and the party's leadership started to negotiate with him about a solution from the dramatically eventuated situation. It was not easy to find a smart compromise solution in anyway and thus the negotiation was prolonged. However, public demonstrations were not stopping and their requirements were basically very simple. The rule of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia ended and it was clear that it is necessary to build a new government, which would lead Czechoslovakia out of the crisis situation.

It showed that by a good will on both sides, it was possible to reach an agreement also on very complicated problems. Again the predecessors' democratic tradition succeeded and basic steps, which could overcome apparently unresolvable situation, were agreed.

A new government composed of representatives of communists as well as dissidents was, under the leadership of a Slovak, Marián Čalfa, a former deputy prime minister, appointed by president Husák. This opened a way to a resignation of the president and to the election of a new one. A former dissident, Václav Havel, became the new president of Czechoslovakia by a unanimous election of the reformed Federal Assembly in the end of 1989.

It was confirmed again that when the Czechs have the possibility to solve also very complicated political issues of a cardinal significance with no foreign intervention, they are able to find a solution in a democratic and cultural way. Thus the world public named historical happenings in Czechoslovakia in the end of 1989 “the Velvet revolution” as everything passed with no fights and bloodshed, to which it was coming at similar occasions in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkans.

T. G. Masaryk once said that states live by ideas, from which they were born. Modern history of Czechoslovakia proves that in certain way even though sometimes it lasts very long and at the same time one needs to overcome very difficult periods. Especially if it regards a small country surrounded by other states and situated in a place very much strategically and geopolitically exposed as it is, for example, the centre of Europe, where the Czechs have been living since within living memory.

Into the European Union

The European Union is the first successful attempt to establish the cooperation of Europe's nations and to reach its unification based on principles of democracy and human rights. Thus it is not a problem for the Czechs to join it with conviction and to actively help in fulfillment of its long-term goals. First free elections were held within a deep unity and newly elected MPs were self-concerned that they were sufficiently qualified to decide on everything. At the same time, it was not easy at all to behave really democratically and also socially and politically responsibly. Many Czechs and Slovaks thought that everything was allowed in freedom and democracy.

Unifying Europe was hoping that Czechoslovakia with its democratic traditions in its transformation process can become a proof of the possibility of the national tolerance of some together-living nati-

ons. It did not happen so, as after elections in 1992, it came to separation of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, even though political parties did not have it in their programs. The Czech government, lead by economists, was convinced that it would join the developed countries faster without Slovakia; the Slovak government, on the contrary, overcharged its possibilities to require parity of both parts of the federalized state in everything. And prime ministers of both countries, convinced about their perfection, wasted much of what had Czechoslovakia carried with it from the past.

The fact that the separation of Czechoslovakia in 1992 passed in a democratic and cultural way with no armed conflicts, which were occurring in federal states as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, partially balanced certain disappointment of most of Europe.

The desintegration of Czechoslovakia moved both newly created states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak republic, in the size range of European states into the background, however thanks to a close cooperation with neighbouring Poland and Hungary within the Visegrad group, they could help each other mutually when they were looking for their place in the complicated European politics and in the international forum as such.

First steps, for example to become full members of the Council of Europe or to be accepted as associated members into the European Union, were relatively easy and originally already new Czechoslovakia managed it. However, then a longer and more difficult negotiation on adaptation of the state organization on conditions of the European Union started. And that was already not an easy process.

At first, it was necessary to overcome many naive perceptions of Czechoslovak citizens on easiness on the entry into the integration process, which had been ongoing for more than 40 years. It was thus necessary to overcome many problems of different character on the way to a gradual social rebuilding of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, to find necessary corrections for their economies in order to incorporate them into the common market after the association period.

It was not easy in any way also to overcome some very strong anti-integration tendencies, which dominated among economists, which ruled with their opinions in first Czechoslovak governments and thus it happened that the Czech republic, as one of the most economically and politically developed ones, asked for the entry into the European

union only in the beginning of January 1996 as the last one from the associated states.

The year 1989 represented a decisive step to overcome the bilateral division of Europe. The Warsaw Treaty was dissolved by itself; however by adoption of its new doctrine, the NATO decided to search for new realization. One started to negotiate on its enlargement and the Czech Republic was, together with Hungary and Poland invitation to become its first new members. The Czech Republic welcomed this decision thinking that by this step, the security of the republic would be fully secured, even though some were not fully convinced about that.

However, soon it showed that also certain problems can be connected with the NATO membership. When the US government, in the sense of the new NATO doctrine, enforced the air bombing of Yugoslavia as an “acquisition” of the alliance for the diplomatic negotiation of the complicated Kosovo issue, the Czech government had to face a quite significant disagreement of the Czech public with eventual Czech participation at military actions.

The Czech government together with the Greek government, as representatives of smaller NATO members, however, closer familiarized with the complicated situation in the Balkans, then came with their own initiative of a complex attitude to problems of this part of Europe. For that the Czech government received a tough critics from the side of the opposition, however, the European Union overtook Czech-Greek incentives into its global program for Balkan’s stabilisation.

Left-wing Czech governments with the dominance of social democracy progressed individually regarding their clearly pro-European oriented politics. Also the discussions on preparations for the entry of the Czech Republic into the European Union were taking place much more intensively and openly, even though it was not easy in any way. The entry of the Czech Republic into the European Union was expressly approved by the Czech public, which also welcomed that the 1st of May 2004 became the day when the Czech Republic became a full member of the European Union also with other European states.

By this day the Czechs became full citizens of the European Union. The membership in it significantly strengthened the security situation of the Czech Republic in Europe and in the international politics as such. However, at the same time the Czech republic has to subordina-

te to all, till now valid and adopted laws and principles of the social life of the union; however, at the same time, it gained the right to participate at the elaboration of all new laws actively; and in many cases it has even the right to block the adoption of some measures by its vote.

For Europe's Unity

The unification process has not finished yet, 1.1.2007 Bulgaria and Romania became members but undoubtedly it is on a good way as it has already reached decisive steps. It depends on the development in individual European states, which are not members of the European Union now, how fast they can adapt to conditions valid in this union so they could become its full and sui juris members.

There is still a duty for the European Union and all its citizens to finish the administrative construction of the union by fulfilment of integration and democratization goals and, at the same time, to become, a really unified Europe, one of Great powers, which should lead the world politics based on multipolarity.

The entry into the 21st century was marked by the formation of the world terrorism threatening the basic of the human existence as such. Now the fighting against the terrorism is organised without a really success by USA. The critical attitude towards this politics, as well as to its plans for the world lead by one hyperpower, is getting stronger.

Interest in the politics of multipolarity, proposed by two most populated states of the world, China and India, is growing. These formulated the principle of a peaceful coexistence, which a big part of the world accepted and which expressly worked, already in 1954. Also another superpower, the Russian Federation, supports the idea of multipolarity and many other significant states do not make their sympathies secret.

Europe still has a strong word in the World and it will depend on it if it joins supporters of multipolarity, where, of course, the position of one of few poles would belong to it.



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