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December 2, 2010

No 24 (2759)
Volume 61 • \$2.00

Published every other Thursday
26 issues in 24 mailings a year
PAP Registration No. 8108
ISSN 08329-2668

NOVÝ DOMOV



THE NEW HOMELAND

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CZECH AND SLOVAK BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER www.novydomov.com

Confidential material from US embassy in Prague included in WikiLeaks release

By Chris Johnstone

Czech-US relations have been caught up in the massive release of secret US diplomatic cables by the WikiLeaks server. One of more than a thousand cables from the US embassy in Prague already put up on the whistle blower's server provides a snapshot of how Czech and US diplomats began to recast their relations after the US dumped its plans for an anti-missile base in the Czech Republic.

The WikiLeaks' release of around 250,000 secret cables between US embassies and the State Department which started late on Sunday night is the biggest diplomatic leak in history.

The descriptions of French President Nicolas Sarkozy as an emperor without clothes, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as an alpha male and the Teflon epithet attached to German chancellor Angela Merkel are certainly not in the mainstream of diplomatic language.

Other more serious revelations about the underside of diplomatic dealings include US spying on the United Nations and Arab demands for Washington to act against the threat of a nuclear armed Iran.

Czech-US relations are also included in the leaked material, though it must be said that nothing too undiplomatic or explosive has come out so far. The whistle blowing website has so far uploaded just one cable from the US embassy in Prague to the State Department.

That confidential cable from October 2009 gives an enlightening snapshot of a usually hidden diplomatic world. It shows Washington and Prague struggling to agree a new strategic anchor for their relationship a month after President Barack Obama dumped the anti-missile defence shield plans of his predecessor founded on a Czech base and Polish interceptor missiles.

Moves to reset the relationship seem to be hampered by an

overwhelming Czech focus on military issues while the US side is encouraging broader cooperation. Indeed, the then Czech foreign minister Jan Kohout is shown to have stalled one foreign ministry paper about the strategic concept because it was too narrowly focussed. The ministry was still, however, seeking Czech involvement in "a new security architecture" however it evolves.

No major surprises there. But there are apparently another 1,270 documents from the US embassy in Prague ready to be released according to the British newspaper, the Guardian, one of five publications worldwide to have been given advance access to the WikiLeaks material. This

compares with around 1,700 documents coming out of Vienna and Berlin and just under 8,000 out of the Turkish capital Ankara.

The US embassy in Prague has refused to comment or even say if it warned the Czech Foreign Ministry of the impending leaks. Petr Drulák is head of the Prague-based Institute of International Relations. He says the leaks are a catastrophe for diplomats.

In the long term, Mr. Drulák says diplomacy will be forced farther into its shell with even tougher precautions against the secretive world being exposed to the public. Source: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/confidential-material-from-us-embassy-in-prague-included-in-wikileaks-release>, 29. 11. 2010

President Václav Klaus has been a dominant figure on the Czech political scene ever since the early 1990s. The founder of the Civic Democrats was finance minister and later prime minister, before becoming head of state seven years ago. It is perhaps surprising then that the first political biography of Mr. Klaus has only now been published.

"Klaus: A Portrait of a Politician in Twenty Images" by the political analyst Jiří

Pehe has provoked heated debate between the president's supporters and opponents.

Mr. Pehe, President Klaus is today known abroad mainly for two things: his strong views of the EU, and his denial of man-made global warming. But at home, he remains one of the most popular, or trusted, politicians. How do you see these two facts coming together?

First political biography

By Jan Richter

"I think we have to distinguish between Klaus as a politician and Klaus seen as the president. In the CR, basically any politician who becomes president will be popular, in my opinion. It's not so much their personality that people evaluate but rather the presidential post. I think when Václav Klaus leaves the office in

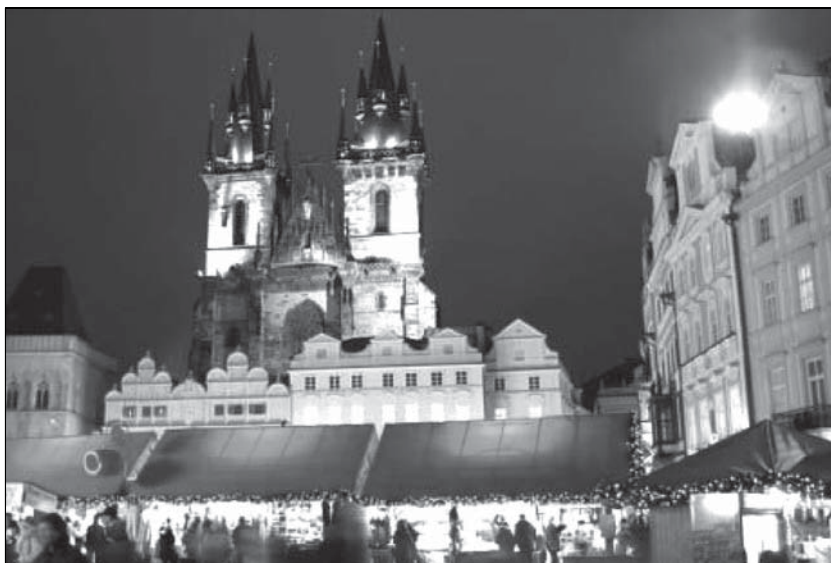
2013 and perhaps decides to go back to party politics, his popularity will not be by any means as

high as it is now."

You say that the greatest defeat Mr. Klaus ever experienced occurred when he signed the Lisbon treaty. Do you see that as a final stage of his career, some sort of symbolic demise of Mr. Klaus in Czech politics?

"One should never say that there is a final stage in Mr. Klaus political career simply because we have seen time and again that he does best in situations when he seems defeated. In 1997 and several times later, such as the first presidential election, he rose from the ashes, so to speak. So one cannot really underestimate him. But what I'm trying to show is that there is a tendency towards a gradual decline. Some of his views in the last few years have been more or less bizarre; he picks themes and topics that are really marginal as far as the Czech society is concerned, and he's trying to raise his international profile with these issues. In most cases he's not succeed so he would abandon some of the controversial issues, such as 'human rightism', 'NGOism', and other supposed ills of modern society, and move on to something else, such as global warming.

I think the Lisbon treaty was really a hard defeat for him because he invested huge political capital into it. His struggle against the treaty had concrete political ramifications and in the end, he had to conclude this fight, either by signing or not signing. After he lost on all battlefronts he did sign it, although it was clear it was the last thing he wanted to do. More of interview you can read: <http://www.radio.cz/en/news#2>.



Prague's Christmas markets are some of the best known in Europe. This year they will begin with the switching on of the Christmas tree lights on November 28, and will run until January 1. Tens of stalls will appear on the Old Town Square and Wenceslas Square where you will be able to

buy Christmas decorations, corn doll tree decorations, yuletide straw figures, beautifully decorated gingerbread, fragrant candles and warm scarves and hats.

Even if you don't choose any presents, you certainly won't be able to resist the refreshments on offer. Hot punch, aromatic

mead, roast chestnuts and corn on the cob, old Bohemian baked 'trdlo' (a funny-sounding word in Czech) and grilled sausages are a well-deserved reward for enduring the yuletide crowds. Choirs and children's performances can be watched on the stage.

Photo Wikipedia

FROM THE GALLERY OF SUCCESSFUL MEMBERS OF SAN FRANCISCO SOKOL

For ND by Zdeněk Verňák

With its ninety members, Sokol San Francisco is one of the average size units of American Sokol Organization - a very important organization for educational and physical activity of its members. But our unit is unique in having the highest percentage of members still fluent in Czech or Slovak language. We are hardly a front page item, no reporter ever knocked on our door requesting an interview. No Congressman ever solicited our collective opinion on public matters. And yet - there are people on our membership roster who do deserve public attention, for they significantly contributed to the betterment of our society. Their deeds are known to just a few and we are still searching for an encyclopedist able and willing to chronicle life's stories and accomplishments of our best.

As immigrants, we have a double identity and a degree of split loyalty between our native country and our new one, where we found an opportunity to „pursue happiness“. Our old country gave us the mother's language and molded our characters during the forming years of our youth. Then, politically under the control of dictatorial and hateful ideology limiting our basic freedoms, a great number of non-conformists were forced to leave the country, many times under dramatic circumstances, to seek a new life in the free world.

But „The old love never rusts“ and since the „Velvet revolution“ in 1989 many dormant ties between families and friends, living on the opposite sides of the former „Iron Curtain“ have been restored.

Dr. Ing. Desider Slavoj and his wife, have been Sokol members longer than I can remember. Actually, at 96, he's been everything longer than anyone can remember! At his age bright mind and agile body are to be admired. (He just passed the driving test and DMV extended his license until 2015 when he'll be 101!) His life

story reads like a script of an adventure movie.

Born in Spišská Nova Ves, there he completed High School he graduated in Engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague, postgraduate study of Aerial Photogrammetry, completed in Zurich, Switzerland. After a special training he was awarded Doctorate in Engineering at the Tech. Univ. in Vienna, Austria. Then he decided not to return to the Communist Czechoslovakia, where there was no chance for him to continue running his private Engineering Office in Piestany, Slovakia.

His wife, Vera, managed to follow him shortly, after an adventurous journey across the heavily guarded borders. Together they emigrated to Australia where Eugene quickly proved his mantle and the official recognition soon followed.

In March 1954, when he was employed as City engineer, he received an invitation from the visiting Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh to be present at the Royal Music Festival. Then in October of the same year the local paper published a highly complimentary article titled: „City Engineer is a Man of Wide Experience“. After 1 1/2 years they left Port Pirie and Desider took position as a lecturer in Photogrammetry at the University of Melbourne.

During his first term of his teaching Slavojs were surprised by a letter from US Consul informing them that, after a five year wait, they got the immigration visa. A fast decision put them on a ship and after a four week of rough sailing they landed in San Francisco.

In 1959 Eugene started teaching at the City College of S.F. full time, and part time at the Universities in Honolulu, Berkeley and Fresno. Steady income from a lot of overtime work and frugal life allowed Slavojs to accumulate a reasonably decent wealth for a

comfortable retirement. Half a century of absence failed to sever Eugene's bond to his native Spis District of Slovakia, so he decided to build a Basic Art School in Smizany to pay back the cost of the education he received there. Eugene's investment of over \$ 360,000 and an inspired selection of an excellent Ing. Architect Dusan Burak's architectural firm Atrium resulted in a significant and positive change in the cultural life of Smizany. The Basic Art School (ZVS) was open on Br. Slavoj's ninetieth birthday, 22nd of June, 2004. The same year Slovak Architectural Society awarded the building design the country's highest architectural award - Dusan Jurkovic Price.

The US Ambassador, the Honorable Rodolphe M. Vallee, visited the school later and, in his letter to Bro. Desider, he states: „As Ambassador, one of my primary goals here is to expand connections between Slovaks and Americans. Through you gift, you made an enormous contribution towards building lasting ties for generations to come.“

What warms Eugene's heart more than official praise, and rewards, is the realization that the kids will have a rare opportunity to develop their talents in music,

dance, visuals and multi-media. The Art School is now a living monument to Brother Slavoj's altruism. It will live in the minds of young, budding artists, who

can now develop their talents under the leadership of highly qualified teachers, in a pleasing, dignified environment. Originally planned for 200 students, the school had to be expanded to accommodate 580 young art lovers from all corners of Slovakia and other countries. Concerts, plays, international competitions, folklore shows now enrich the cultural life of Smizany, its reputation and influence reaches far beyond the local turf.

During celebrations of the fifth anniversary of school's opening Ing. Dusan Burak donated a valuable book to the Town of Smizany - The World Atlas of Architecture of Twenty-First

Century. In 800 pages with 4,600 photos, we are presented with more than thousand architectural items, that were selected from a field of 10,000 works built in



the last nine years, by the world's best architects. On page 552 you'll find our school, the only one representing Slovakia. What a success story! And a sliver of all the glory falls on our San Francisco Unit, proud to have Brother Desider as a member.

I believe I speak for all our Brothers & Sisters when I wish Desider long years of happy life so he can follow the progress of his school and keep supporting its programs financially.

If you want to learn more, you should read his book „Našinec vo svete“, given as a premium to anyone who contributes to the Basic Art School.

The account for contributions: ZUS/Smizany, 34451701002/5600 DEXIA Bank, Spišská Nova Ves, Slovak Republic.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR NEW CANADIAN STUDENTS

A recent RBC/Student awards Inc. survey found that New Canadian students are often challenged by financial concerns and feel added pressure to achieve higher levels of academic performance. For many foreign students there is a high degree of assumed responsibility to be sensible with finances. They recognize the fact their parents made considerable sacrifices to enable them to study in Canada. As a result, many new Canadian students are forced to seek alternative income sources such as scholarships, loans and part-time employment. They are also very cautious about how they spend their money. Some highlights from the survey include:

72 per cent of new Canadians rely on scholarships or bursaries to pay for post-secondary education; 72 per cent of females and 69 per cent of males rely on their family to pay for post-secondary education; 39 per cent of new Canadian students rely on a combination of their parents income (9 per cent), a part-time job (20 per cent) and a loan or line of credit (5 per cent) to manage day-to-day expenses while at school; 39 per cent of new Canadian students are unaware of scholarships offered to them by Canadian financial institutions.

RBC recognizes the pressures faced by students and has created a scholarship program for new Canadian students as well as a free student banking account, a no fee student credit card and preferential interest rates for RBC student loans. Ultimately, RBC's goal is to help alleviate the added stress of rising tuition fees to ensure that the students can focus primarily on their studies and settling into their new home. The RBC Royal Bank Scholarship for New Canadians is designed to encourage students who have immigrated to Canada in the last 10 years to share their experiences with adjusting to life in Canada. The deadline to apply is February 1, 2011 at 6:00PM EST.

RBC has a diverse set of scholarship programs and has awarded over \$300,000 in scholarships annually. To learn more about RBC student scholarships visit www.rbcrroyalbank.com/scholarships/ Some of the 2010 RBC Royal Bank New Canadian Scholarship winner's include:

Peter Wang of Langley, B.C. immigrated to Canada with his mom and dad in 1999. Although the language barrier posed some challenges initially, he learned the language and quickly adapted to his new country. Mr. Wang credits the warm embrace of his community and the support of his classmates for easing his transition to Canadian life. Mr. Wang said: "Integration is like immigration. Both are by choice, and not by

chance. Receiving the RBC Scholarship was like a warm round of applause telling me that I made the right choice to become a true Canadian."

Malithi Fernando of Edmonton, AB, immigrated to Canada from Sri Lanka with her parents and younger sister in 1999. The family faced challenges adapting to the cold Canadian climate and adjusting to life without their large extended family. Ms. Fernando's parents, who were qualified professionals in Sri Lanka, also had to accept lower-paying jobs in Canada. Ms. Fernando is thankful to her school classmates who immediately made her feel welcome in her new community.

If you are interested in speaking with a past winner and/or an RBC spokesperson please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you, Jill Quinn.

The study was conducted online with a sample of graduating high school students from the Student awards online community, who met participation criteria. A total of 1,000 students completed the survey between May 4 and May 14, 2010. The data was weighted by gender to ensure a proportionate representation of the post-secondary student population across Canada: 60 per cent female and 40 per cent male.

Jill Quinn, manager, Corporate Communications, RBC, ph.: 416.313.8121, cell: 416.557.8717 email: jill.quinn@rbc.com

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How did you feel about Czech language when growing up? Did you like to speak it or did your parents have to push you?

It was an automatic learning process – as any small child I absorbed Czech as much as English from the world around me. But as soon as I started kindergarten, English became predominant, and my parents, of course, accepted it. My grandfather Josef Chmel instilled in us all the appreciation of Czech and Moravian traditions which my parents Erica and Stan Viezner still carry on. As a result I have always remained proud of my heritage.

What positive or negative impressions did you have when first visiting the CR?

I first visited CR with my sister in late 1980's, still during the communist regime. We flew in to Prague completely naïve, with our new-wave hairstyles, torn jeans and tie-die shirts. What a sight we must have been! We had people following us – some tried to talk to us in English, many just stared, but we found most people to be very helpful and friendly. In Mlada Boleslav, I remember seeing the tanks going down the street every day – showing off the strength of the Russian army.

What eventually attracted you enough to move there?

In 1990, I made the decision to go to CR to work for almost a year in the hotel trade, a job arranged by some Czech friends in Toronto. For me, as a graduate of the hotel program at the University of Guelph with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, this was a perfect opportunity. Having in my resume that I have worked in Europe was always impressive.

My thoughts were: why work in Toronto when I could work in Prague? I could always return home if it did not work out. Looking back, I am quite proud of myself that I persevered.

My new job was challenging to say the least as I had to start at the very bottom in Housekeeping, then advance to Laundry, the Kitchen and work my way up to the Front Desk. I must thank the ladies in the Housekeeping Department who were so patient with me in the hotel and taught me so much.

My Czech was at a very basic level. My first mistake was to say Ahoj! to the General Manager of the hotel where I was employed! It was difficult at first, but I had worked hard on improving and broadening my Czech. In those days very few people spoke English – it always surprised me when I tried to speak in broken Czech and people would reply in German. But as my Czech improved so did my integration into the society. I started making friends and also found the Canadian Club in Prague, which helped tremendously.

In those days Prague was still dreary – it was only a short time after the revolution and not much had changed. In the evening

Canadian-born Marie Manzac first moved to the Czech Republic in 1990. After a year she came back to Canada only to return to CR again in 1993. Instead of her original plans to be there for 1-2 years, she subsequently decided to stay there permanently. Both of her parents are Czech, but did not come to Canada together – her father escaped the communist regime and first worked on a farm in Ontario, and her mother immigrated legally with her family and finished her high school in Toronto. They met, married and settled in Toronto where they ran a very successful business. However, Czech language and customs prevailed in their home and it made it easier for Marie to later establish herself in the Czech Republic.

Wenceslav's square was dark and forbidding – not the neon show it is now. I remember waiting in line at the fruit and vegetable shop just to buy some old oranges, and to get my vegetable fix I had to buy sterilized or pickled veggies.

After almost a year, I returned to Toronto to work in the hotel trade, but my goal has always been to return to Prague. That I did 2 years later and went to work at the Renaissance hotel (now Hilton). I originally intended to stay for 1-2 years but all these years later I am still here!

What kind of opportunities did you see there?

The opportunities for advancement were promising and I worked my way up to middle/upper management where I worked much quicker than I would have in Canada. I met a great group of co-workers, worked in sales, organized conferences and banquets. That often took me to the kitchen to prepare menus with the chef, and it was there

that I met my husband. I suppose meeting Jean-Paul after 7 years in Prague was the final reason to establish my permanent home base there. Shortly afterwards I was expecting our son, my husband got a position as Executive Chef at the Marriott hotel downtown and I left my job to take care of our family. I also took over the management of the building, which our family received in restitution. It is a large rental operation with apartments, 2 storefronts and numerous offices. I am my own boss and can do the work in-between juggling my family duties.

How is your social life in CR? Are you associated/connected with any specific group?

I have always had mainly Czech friends and associates but as of late I have become more involved with our Canadian community. Also, living here has made it possible for my son to speak three languages fluently (Czech, French and English) and

pecially in Prague.

Are you closer to culture or sports?

Due to the lack of time for culture my concentration is more on sport. My son Filip is playing both hockey and football (soccer); much of my time is thus spent at the field/hockey rink for practices and weekend games. I also own a horse that is stabled close to our home, which is a small village 30



km outside of Prague in the area of Karlstěj. Horse riding has been part of my life ever since I was a small girl. I take my riding seriously and train both in dressage and jumping.

Your parents left Czechoslovakia for Canada and now you make your home in CR. Isn't that a bit ironic?

Perhaps, but I believe I made the right decision especially from the point of view of my business career, and of course because I met my husband here. He is French, a chef by profession and imagine – I don't have to cook at home!

What aspects of your upbringing do you value the most?

Emphasis on education! I also remember how my parents wanted me to be versatile in my out-of-school activities – they encouraged me to try many things – lessons in violin, piano, figure skating (what I really wanted was to play hockey – and eventually did at the university and even now play in "father's team" games against our son Filip's team), modern dance, singing and swimming.

They also sent me to hunting and fishing camps and to horseback riding lessons.

How is your long-distance relationship with your parents? Do you miss them?

We try to keep in touch as much as possible, but yes I miss them very much and the whole family, which is based in Ontario. We try to visit at least once a year, but it is difficult to manage as we also share our vacation time with our French family.

What do you consider most important in your life?

Life evolves around my family. My priorities are my son and my husband.

All three of us are continuously progressing and evolving. We need to learn and adapt both professionally and personally.

My emphasis will always be the stability of our family life – whether it continues here, in the Czech Republic, or in Canada, only time will tell.

I think that will be a great advantage to him.

How do you see the young people in Czech Republic?

They have so many opportunities and they do take advantage of them – many are learning languages, traveling more and discovering foreign cultures – with the Schengen treaty one can travel effortlessly across the EU.

On the other hand, their work ethics certainly need improvement. They perform only at the minimum level necessary, but expect the maximum financial rewards. Perhaps this is due to the very low unemployment, es-

pecially in Prague. The whole region of Sumava, where I have spent time biking and hiking in the mountains. My grandmother was born there!

As a young woman familiar with lifestyles in countries, what similarities and differences do you see?

As I mentioned, young people in CR are very progressive, learning languages and traveling – but they seem to be very materialistic – emphasis is on designer clothing and goods, expensive cars, the fast life.

Do you keep in touch with Canada?

Anna Porter is a Canadian publisher and writer (born Anna Szigethy in Budapest), founder of publishing house Key Porter Books which she sold in 2004, to focus on writing. She has published three mystery novels and three books on Middle European history. This, her most recent book, was published in September 2010.

Selected bibliography:
Hidden Agenda
Mortal Sins
The Bookfair Murders
The Storyteller
Kasztner's Train
The Ghosts of Europe

This is her record of recently visiting four Central European countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic). She interviews key personalities and finds that these countries are still struggling under the weight of history and memory, its peoples divided over half-forgotten events, old ethnic rivalries, borders drawn and redrawn - ghosts that still influence their lives. She also discovers some nostalgia for the Habsburgs who ruled the area „on-and-off“ for five hundred years.

As Milan Kundera noted, the area consists of medium-size and small countries, with their precarious lives between large nations that are uninterested in their existence (remember Munich!). Their attitude toward the European Union is ambivalent, to say the least, noting the views of Havel and Klaus.

For the purpose of this review, we concentrate on her report from one country - the Czech Republic.

„Driving to the city from Prague Airport on a clear day, there is a moment, as you start your descent from the hills, when the domes and rooftops of the golden city present themselves

THE GHOSTS OF EUROPE

By Anna Porter

Reviewed by Ernie Zucker

to the visitor and you know you have arrived at the heart of Europe. She very astutely describes the communist rule between 1949 and 1989, and the rise of the dissident movement ending with the „velvet revolution“.

Most of this is well-known, but she describes the participation in the events of Canadian Paul Wilson who came to Prague almost by accident in 1967, after studying in London, and being offered a teaching job. In Prague he learned Czech, he also played guitar and sang in a band that called itself the Plastic People of the Universe, after Frank Zappa's song of the same name. The band was eventually considered subversive and some of its members jailed.

Paul's first encounter with Václav Havel's writing was an essay he read in 1976, in the form of a letter to Czechoslovakia's Communist leader Gustav Husák. It talked of the system's „lethal principle“ of reducing everything to „a state of dull, inert uniformity“, and warned that people's life force could not be suppressed forever.

Paul Wilson was eventually expelled from the country and returned to London. Subsequently, he translated many of Havel's books from Czech into English.

While in London he met the playwright Tom Stoppard. The latter was born in Zlín as Tom Straussler; his family fled to Singapore with other Jewish Czechs in 1939. Interestingly, in 2005 Stoppard called Paul to ask help for the background on his Plastic People band, required for his new play Rock „n“ Roll. It opened in

London and New York, and eventually came to Toronto. Paul is seventy years old now, living on the shores of Lake Huron, happy to have been a part of recent Czech history.

From this point on, her Czech story deals with more recent events, mainly through interviews with leading public figures. Former Minister of Minorities and Human Rights Michael Kocáb, also a well-known musician, describes his 1990 visit



to the Kremlin with Alexander Dubček who mysteriously disappeared before entering the Great Hall. Kocáb then stood where Stalin used to ruminate and had to „carry the ball“. He was in charge of the Roma (Gypsy) problems which resulted in the exodus to Canada and the imposition of visas for Czech nationals traveling here.

Mrs. Porter then met with Pavel Žáček, director for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, who explained how difficult it is deal with key ex-communists, guilty

of crimes against humanity, to bring them to justice and have their victims compensated.

Porter notes comments on Klaus. She quotes the Economist as describing him as a „nationalistic populist“, and not quite a Thatcherite. This view is confirmed by the fact that he protected Czech banks from foreign influence - two banks collapsed as a result: the Postal Bank and Agrobank. He is a pronounced EU skeptic. However, the Czech economy did not fare too badly during the recent crisis.

Through the years of Havel and Klaus in public life together, they continued to clash over a multitude of issues, large or small,

see her). He is a highly educated person with two PhD's - one in Oriental languages and one in Economics. Weigl was adamant that there was nothing wrong with the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans after World War 2. We shouldn't believe in illusions, he says, harboured by my grandparents during the first Republic - and then by my parents about the Communist Paradise.

Porter then describes her interview with Tomáš Halík, a catholic priest, also an important person in the resistance. In 1998 Havel proposed Halík as the best person to succeed him as President. He declined, because he no longer regarded the presidency as a position of influence.

„To realize the platonic ideal of the ‚philosopher king‘ is unrealistic except on very special occasions, such as Masaryk after World War 1 and Havel, after the fall of Communism.“

Halík is the author of over 200 books and has lectured all over the world. He remains optimistic about the country's future, mainly because of its youth. The corruption fighter Jan Urban believes that this problem permeates from the highest circles in the country. He cites Klaus appointing personal friends' couples to the highest court in the land. Urban is another Czech optimistic about the future - he cites the 2010 parliamentary elections, where a strong young people vote was significant in the strong showing of the new TOP 09 (Tradice, Odpovědnost, Prosperita) party, now included in the coalition government. Its leader Karel Schwarzenberg, from the powerful branch of Czech aristocracy, is a fiscally conservative - socially liberal reformer. He has promised to salvage public finances and restore Czechs' self-respect. To end this chapter, Porter reports on the Forum 2000 which took place in Prague in September 2009. It was an intellectual talk-fest by international personalities, including opening remarks by the Dalai Lama. After the meeting, she had a short session with Havel and friends. Havel told her about his current work on a film. Another meeting she attended was „The debate and gala to mark the twentieth anniversary of political changes in Czechoslovakia and the end of the Iron Curtain“. In his speech, Havel compared intellectual life in prison to that of outside. In the world inside everything is certain. In the world outside, nothing is. You have to learn to think for yourself. He warned against accepting easy, ready-made answers and against newly sophisticated methods of manipulating people. Some people cried, others cheered.

Porter's insight into the situation within Poland, Slovakia and Hungary is admirable, worth reading. All I can say, seconding Peter C. Newman's comment about this book, „a must read“

Photo: <http://network.nationalpost.com>

Anka Voticky and her English book „Knocking on Every Door“ For ND by Ladislav Křivánek

In the spring of 2010 there was a vast array of Czech articles about the oldest and most active Montreal senior, a Holocaust survivor, Anna Voticky, 97, and her Czech book „Zachráněna v šanghajském ghettu“ (Salvaged in the Shanghai ghetto), in a few countries around the world. After a short delay (and under a different title) there is now her larger English original „Knocking on Every Door“.

The Azrieli Foundation launched Series 3 of their award-winning Holocaust Survivor Memoirs with an unique evening events in Montreal on October 5th 2010 and in Toronto on October 26th 2010, that included excerpts from the newly launched memoirs read by the authors. One of them was Anka Voticky with her book „Knocking on Every Door“, in Montreal read by her son Mike and in To-

ronto by her son Milan. With so few Canadian Holocaust survivors left to share their stories, the opportunity to hear personal accounts could not be missed. Hear these remarkable accounts about courage, survival and overcoming adversity - stories that are as relevant today as they were over 65 years ago. All guests received a complimentary set of the Series 3 memoirs following the launch. Anka Voticky's memoir,

„Knocking on Every Door“, is now available at CDN \$14.95 directly from Second Story Press (<http://secondstorypress.ca>), 20 Maud Street, Suite 401, Toronto, ON, M5V 2M5, Canada, Tel: 416-537-7850 Fax: 416-537-0588 E-mail: info@secondstorypress.ca

Anka Voticky's Czech book „Zachráněna v šanghajském ghettu“ is available at CDN \$15.00 directly from Czech Books (www.czech-books.com) Tel:

888-287-1015 E-mail: mail@czech-books.com

Anka Voticky Knocking on Every Door

There was a feeling of imminent danger... we were all subject to the mad and ever-changing rules of Hitler's Germany. We were desperate to find a safe haven. This extraordinary memoir describes the circuitous journey taken by Anka Voticky and her family in their search for safety from the Nazis occupying Czechoslovakia - a journey that took her and her family to far-away Shanghai. As Hitler's army entered Czechoslovakia, Anka, a twenty-five-year-old mother of two, and her husband, Arnold, fled to China with several members of her family, arriving in Shanghai on May 10, 1940, after a month on board ship. Three years later, the Japanese forces

occupying the city moved Anka and her family, along with all the other European Jewish refugees, into a ghetto in Shanghai's Hongkou District. Estranged from all that was familiar, Anka's memoir describes how she and her family adjusted to life in Shanghai among the many expatriates and struggled with harsh living conditions in the Hongkou ghetto. After the war, the Votickys returned to Prague only to flee again as the Soviets took control of Czechoslovakia. Desperately looking for security, they seized the opportunity to emigrate to Canada, arriving in Montreal on July 1, 1948.

A rare perspective on the far-reaching impact of World War II, A Strange Haven challenges readers to think about the international shockwaves of war and its legacy of dislocation. It is an inspiring story of love, family commitment and the dogged determination of Anka and her husband as they moved across oceans to build a life of freedom and a better future for their children.