

Thomas Masaryk and the 'Logic of History'

THIS week, on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the birth of Thomas G. Masaryk, the president liberator of Czechoslovakia, the U.S. government has placed into circulation two postage stamps, of 4-cent and 8-cent denomination, belonging to the series of Champions of Liberty. This is done particularly because the present Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, with enduring Stalinist line, tries to suppress or at least profanize the cherished and hallowed memory of the statesman, philosopher, teacher and humanist, by which Masaryk symbolized the devotion of the Czechoslovak island of democracy to the mother democracy of the United States of America. In the background of Masaryk's life is solemnly silhouetted the stature of a great American woman, his Brooklyn-born wife, Charlotte Garrigue, the angel guardian of his rich and active life.

After 300 years of alien domination, by a historic act on the territory of the United States, Czechoslovak freedom was actually reborn. On Oct. 18, 1918, toward the end of World War I, the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence was signed by Masaryk in Philadelphia, in the same Independence Hall, at the same historical table and with the same historical pen with which the American Declaration of Independence was once recorded. This occurred just 10 days before the echo of liberty was sounded in Prague and became the symbol of what the Czechoslovak Republic was to become in its two golden decades, 1918-1938, between the two world wars. President Wilson may have

(Dr. Hujer of the University of Chattanooga, internationally known astronomer and writer, who is a native of Czechoslovakia, tells in this interesting article of a day with the great Czech leader and patriot.)

By KAREL HUJER

been almost forgotten in his own country but his memory was cherished in every Czech home. Only the German invasion destroyed the magnificent Wilson monument which stood in the center of Prague, the capital of Masaryk's republic.

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FOR a philosopher to become the elected political leader of his nation is extremely rare in the history of mankind. Conditions for such development are prepared only by centuries of agony, tears and suffering. As the undaunted defender of any just cause in the great antiquated empire of the House of Hapsburgs, Masaryk always stood boldly on the side of the oppressed and courageously opposed any bigotry which seems to recur under every clime. Whatever the course of events, pleasant or unpleasant, Masaryk believed in the ultimate "logic of history," which was his expression for an ever-abiding Providence. He differed in his practical outlook from the great Russian pacifist and Christian philosopher, Tolstoi, whom he once visited, maintaining the love of my neighbor may coerce me, in his defense, to the use of force. Yet, Masaryk held the unfailing belief that ultimately, in the course of man's history, it is not Caesar but Jesus that shall ever prevail.

I cherish the memory of one wonderful sunlit day in the month of May 1932 spent with this aging wise man, still in the presidential office in his kingdom of democracy. As we walked in the garden of the castle of Lany, in my memory his every word radiates with wisdom. Today, as the sadness of a new form of subjugation settles down on that European humanity, the vision of this man represents an ideal combination of three great Americans—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, and the wisdom of all three of these great seers will be needed to liberate Europe from its present affliction. It was well expressed by H. G. Wells when he once said that if there were ever a United States of Europe, Masaryk would be their most appropriate first president.

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THE Communist attempt to erase the memory of Masaryk is utterly futile. His heritage resounds throughout the land of John Hus and Comenius and his spiritual force will spread out to every region of the world where the Communist neo-feudal tyranny seems to overtake humanity trapped in the snare of dehumanized collectivism. Masaryk's heritage joins the solemn chorus of Jeffersonian pledge of eternal enmity against any form of tyranny over the mind of man. It is indeed a noble act of the U.S. government to honor this Champion of Liberty in this land of freedom while the voices are silenced in Czechoslovakia, the nation that Masaryk once liberated.