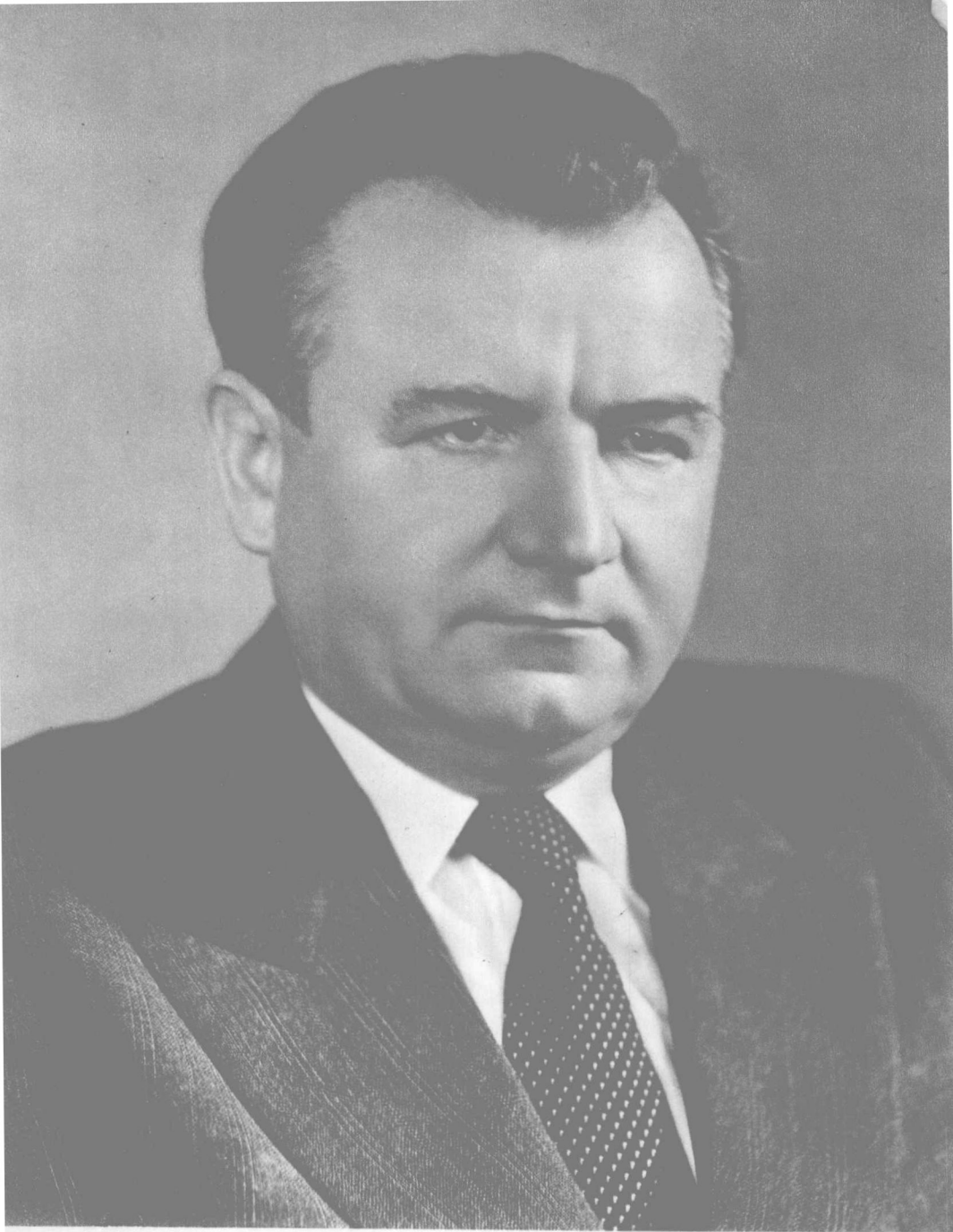


CZECHOSLOVAKIA

the Country of Peace and Labour

KAREL KRÁL





KLEMENT GOTTWALD
President of the Czechoslovak Republic
(died on March 14th 1953)



ANTONÍN ZÁPOTOCKÝ
President of the Czechoslovak Republic

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

the Country of Peace

and Labour

KAREL KRÁL

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*the Country of Peace
and Labour*



PRAGUE 1953

PUBLISHED BY PRÁCE,
PUBLISHING HOUSE OF ROH (REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNION
MOVEMENT) IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, PRAGUE 1953



Greetings from Czechoslovakia, one of the most beautiful countries in the world; greetings from the Czechoslovak People's Democratic Republic, which is going forward by seven league strides towards socialism!

Greetings from a country whose people have become the true owners of all its wealth!

Greetings from the people who gave the world John Huss, John Amos Komenský (Comenius), Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák, Božena Němcová and Julius Fučík. Greetings from a people fighting by their work for socialism, for friendship between the nations, for the maintenance of world peace!

"We the Czechoslovak people declare that we are firmly resolved to build up our liberated state as a people's democracy which will ensure to us a peaceful road to socialism.

We are determined with all our strength to defend the achievements of our national and democratic revolution against all the endeavours of domestic and foreign reaction, as we have proved afresh before the whole world by the action we took in defence of the people's democratic order in February 1948.

We mutually pledge ourselves that our two nations shall labour at this great task together hand in hand, thus continuing the progressive and humanitarian traditions of our history.

The Czechs and Slovaks, two brotherly nations, members of the great Slav family of nations, lived already a thousand years ago jointly in a single state.

We have decided now that our liberated state shall be a national state, rid of all hostile elements, living in brotherly harmony with the family of Slav states and in friendship with all peace-loving nations of the world. We wish it to be a people's democratic state where the people not only make laws through their representatives but also carry them into effect through their representatives. We wish it to be a state in which the entire economy shall serve the people and be so directed that general prosperity should grow, that there should be no economic crises and that the national income should be justly distributed. Along this road we wish to attain to a social order in which exploitation of man by man shall be completely abolished — to socialism."

FROM THE DECLARATION OF THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC
ENACTED ON MAY 9TH 1948

WHAT THE TEXTBOOKS SAY

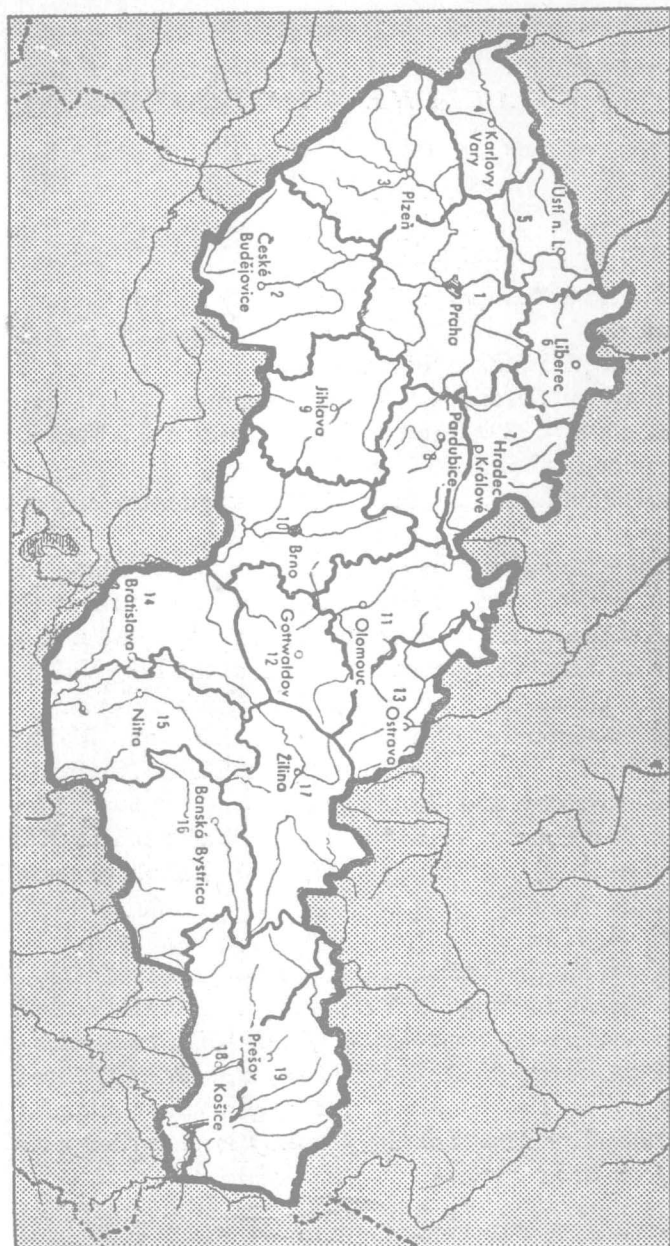
First of all some basic facts.

Czechoslovakia is a highly industrialised Central European country

- situated roughly between 48 and 51 degrees latitude and between 30 and 40 degrees longitude,
- it covers 128,000 square kilometres and has twelve and a half million inhabitants,
- the capital of Czechoslovakia is Prague, the city of a hundred spires,
- the national colours of Czechoslovakia are white, red and blue,
- it is a country of beautiful mountains, such as the Šumava, Krkonoše (Giant Mountains), the Beskyds, and the Tatras, a country of fertile lowlands such as the Elbe Valley, the Haná, the Great Corn Island on the Danube,
- it is a country of great natural riches and highly developed industrial centres such as Ostrava, Plzeň, Kladno, Most, Brno, Gottwaldov and Bratislava,
- it is a country of world famous spas, such as Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) and Mariánské Lázně, Luhačovice and Piešťany.

All the riches and all the beauty of Czechoslovakia belong today and forever to the Czechoslovak working people, who, under the leadership of their Communist Party, have once and for all settled accounts with capitalism and who under the banner of their united trade union organisation, the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, since 1949 have been successfully fulfilling their first Five-Year Plan of socialist construction, Gottwald's first Five-Year Plan, bringing prosperity to their country and support to all peace-loving mankind.

For administrative purposes the Czechoslovak Republic is divided into 19 regions.



II

LOOKING BACK

TIMES OF GLORY AND TIMES OF GLOOM

Let us now run quickly through the main chapters of Czechoslovak history. Legend has it that once upon a time, somewhere around the year 500 A. D., after long migration Forfather Czech stood on the Říp Mountain north of Prague. He surveyed with pleasure the lovely countryside and decided that together with his tribe he would settle in this land "flowing with milk and honey." History proves however, that there were Slav settlements in the Czech Lands long before that date.

Let us leave aside the period during which an independent state unit was formed and crystallized itself in the Czech lands, let us pass over legends, chronicles and historical reports of the Czech princes and kings, both famous as well as unknown, and let us concentrate our interest on the famous chapter, which the Czech people wrote in the book of world-history — the heroic Hussite period.

The Czech people inspired by the teachings of the revolutionary thinker, Master Jan Hus, and led by the blind warrior Jan Žižka of Trocnov, at the beginning of the 15th century led the struggle for truth, progress, liberty and social justice. The whole of world reaction, represented by the Pope, at that time trembled before the people's armies of Jan Žižka. The well-armed hordes of crusaders were gripped with terror at the sound of the Hussite chorale "Ye who are warriors of God".

The flame of the Hussite movement reached out far beyond the borders of the Czech lands. The torch of progress carried forward by the Czech people inspired the greatest revolutionary movement of that time in Europe, the movement of the popular masses for

social justice against feudal oppression and the power of the Church. The Czechoslovak people are proud that under the Hussite banner they were the first to fight for those noble ideals which were taken up by all revolutions of later times.

The defeat of the Czech people by the Habsburg usurper, in the battle of the White Mountain near Prague in 1620, became the grave of Czech independence. There followed the period of oppression of the Czech people, a period of darkness, lasting for three hundred years. The Slovak people at that time groaned under the yoke of the Hungarian oppressors.

It was not possible, however, to smash the power of the people, their thousand-year old culture, and their desire to be free, not even by the most cruel national and social oppression. In the Czech lands and in Slovakia many national and social uprisings broke out. Revolutionary fighters roused the Czech and Slovak workers and peasants to fight for freedom. As the revolutionary movement in the middle of the last century grew all over the world, the national liberation movement in the countries of Czechoslovakia was also strengthened, and the resistance increased of the Czech and Slovak people to the shackles of the Austro-Hungarian prison of nations. Under the red banner of socialism the proletariat began to rally its ranks.

The victory of the Great Socialist October Revolution in Russia had a considerable influence on the national life and political developments in Central Europe, so much, that the Czech and Slovak people by their revolutionary action brought about the foundation of an independent and united Czechoslovak State against the will of world imperialism. The birth of the Czechoslovak Republic was a direct result of the victory of the Great Socialist October Revolution, which showed all nations the way to freedom.

But the bourgeoisie and the right-wing social democrat leaders betrayed the Czechoslovak people. The Czechoslovak Republic, proclaimed on the 28th October 1918, did not live up to the expectations of the Czechoslovak people, inspired as they were by

the ideals of the socialist revolution in Russia and the example of the Russian proletariat.

In 1921 a historic event took place, which was of revolutionary and fundamental importance for the further life of the Czechoslovak people: the foundation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The treachery of the social democrat leaders filled the Czechoslovak people with deep indignation, but it did not destroy their faith in the great ideals of socialism. The majority of the Czechoslovak working class remained true to the ideals of the Great October Revolution, they rejected the traitors, and united under the symbolic emblem of the hammer and sickle, under the militant banner of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY - FIGHTING FOR BREAD AND FREEDOM

Armed with the great teachings of Marxism-Leninism and headed by Klement Gottwald, the Communist Party firmly and loyally led the working masses in pre-war capitalist Czechoslovakia in their difficult struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression, for bread, a better life and for freedom. Untiringly it fought for the unity of the working class movement, for in this unity it saw the best guarantee of the victory of the proletariat in its struggle for a better future.

The bourgeoisie attacked the working people with all its strength and began to do away with all the advances towards progress, to which it had to agree in the post-war revolutionary period. Wages and salaries were cut by as much as 60%. State subsidies to the unemployment allowances were withdrawn, social insurance was restricted. The prices of consumer goods rose considerably.

The capitalist government slashed the rights and liberties of the people. In the name of the so-called "Security law", a law protecting the bourgeois rule, the journals of the working-class orga-

nisations were censored and confiscated, meetings were banned and working-class leaders persecuted and imprisoned.

Especially cruel was the attack of the Czech bourgeoisie in Slovakia. They sent their police force and civil servants to Slovakia and occupied all important positions in the Slovak economy.

The big land-owners betrayed the farmers in an unprecedented manner by means of the land-reform introduced during the revolutionary post-war period. Out of four million hectares of land subject to confiscation, more than 2,100,000 hectares* were returned to the former owners, mostly to German and Hungarian noblemen. By creating the so-called "remainder-estates" of an average of 100 hectares a big land-owning class of 2000 owners of "remainder estates" emerged.

The bulk of the country's economy was in the hands of two banking concerns, the "Trade Bank" (Živnobanka) and the "Agrarian Bank", which were closely linked to German Banking concerns, later on to Hitlerite banks.

The attacks of the capitalists against the people's postwar-achievements did not remain unanswered. In the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia the working people found a reliable defender and leader. Great strikes took place, mass demonstrations were organised, there were clashes between the workers and the police force of the ruling bourgeoisie. On December 22nd 1929, Klement Gottwald speaking in Parliament declared:

"We shall fight against your government, for every crust of bread for the worker and small clerk, we shall fight for adequate unemployment assistance, we shall fight for the demands of the village poor, we shall fight for freedom of the press, for the freedom of assembly and association, for the freedom of the proletariat to strike. Against your fascist police terror we shall put up proletarian defence. In the course of these daily struggles the working people will recognise that it is necessary and possible to settle

* 1 ha — about 2½ acres

accounts with your regime. We shall wage this our struggle relentlessly, uncompromisingly, till your rule shall be swept away.”

The economic crisis of the thirties seriously shook the foundations of the bourgeoisie. In 1933, production dropped to 53 per cent of the 1928 level. The number of unemployed according to official reports, reached 910,000 persons in February 1933, in reality however it considerably surpassed the million mark. In 1934, workers bought 30 per cent less bread than in 1929. During the years 1931 to 1935, 216,000 small tradesmen went bankrupt. Thousands of people left their homeland every year to look for work abroad. But at the same time, the capitalists grew fatter: share capital increased from 7,682 million crowns, in 1929 to 8,891 million crowns in 1934.

The capitalists tried to shift the entire burden of the economic crisis on to the shoulders of the working people. The Communists, the only party which at that time loyally fought for the interests of the workers, demanded that the consequences of the capitalist economic crisis be borne by the capitalists themselves. Klement Gottwald coined the slogan: “Not one man out of work, not one penny off the pay.” “Let the rich pay!”

In concrete militant programmes, the Communist Party demanded that the millions of the capitalist cartels, of the mineowners, the armament kings and the tax defrauders should be taken to overcome the plight of the people. With firm resolution the Communists fought at the head of the toiling masses for every job and for every penny of the worker's wages.

The Party was forced to fight a bitter struggle in organising the workers against the treacherous social democrat leaders, who tried to persuade the people that in times of economic crises “it is not possible to fight”, that “the capitalists themselves are badly off”, that “the workers are helpless because the capitalists do not need any labour.”

Hundreds of workers died at that time, struck down by police bullets while defending their basic conditions of life. Radotín, Duchcov, Košuty, Frývaldov — the names of these towns famous