

CZECHS & CANADA

75th Anniversary of the End of World War II Edition
A Czech Embassy in Canada Publication

Canada Helped Save Czechoslovakia During World War II **Thank You!**

Canada has stood by the Czech nation ever since Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk launched his campaign for the creation of Czechoslovakia during World War I. Canada is home to the second largest Czech diaspora in the world. Czech Canadians have played an important role in the story of Czech-Canadian friendship for more than a century.

One of the most impressive chapters of the story was written during World War II. As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the victory of freedom and democracy in the tragic conflict, we wish to dedicate this year's celebration of the Czech National Day in Canada to Canadians and Czech Canadians who helped save our country during the dark times. The help has not been forgotten. It shall remain a strong foundation of our remarkably close mutual relations.



Edvard Beneš, Czechoslovak President in exile & Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, Friends and leaders of their nations in difficult times (Ottawa, 1943)



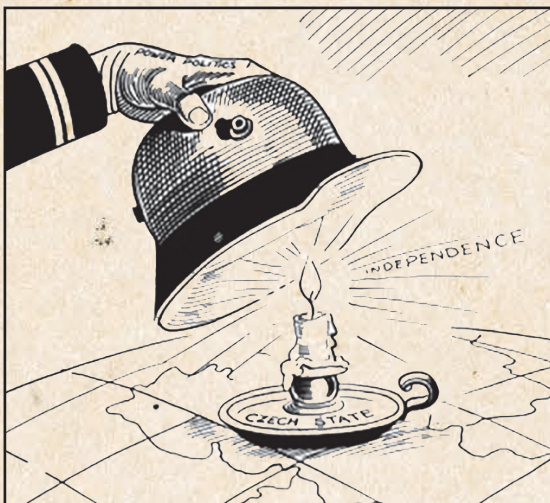
Wartime Logo of the Czechoslovak National Alliance of Canada

TOGETHER TO VICTORY

This is how the story went from March 16, 1939 till May 8, 1945 and beyond...

Czech National Day 2020

On-line Celebration in Canada
October 28, 2020, 8 pm ET
www.TogetherToVictory2020.com



NAZI FLAG OVER PRAGUE CASTLE. Canadian PM Proven Right When Opposing the Munich Agreement

Since its creation on October 28, 1918, the Czechoslovak Republic achieved remarkable success. Under the leadership of President-Liberator Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, it became the strongest democracy in Central Europe and one of the ten most economically developed countries in the world. However, the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938 began its dismemberment. This agreement forced the country to cede a significant part of its territory to Nazi Germany along with its fortifications along the border. In protest, the country's co-founder Edvard Beneš resigned as the Czechoslovak President and went into exile. He accepted an offer to serve as a professor at the University of Chicago. The Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King was agitated by the behavior of the Czechoslovak allies, Britain and France. He did not believe the sacrifice demanded of the Central European nation would bring peace. The later developments confirmed he had been right.

On March 16, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded the rest of the territory of the Czech lands and Czechoslovakia ceased to exist.

BENEŠ INSISTS: CZECHOSLOVAKIA STILL LIVES!

Edvard Beneš immediately responded to the Nazi invasion. He declared to act again as the Czechoslovak President. "Until my last breath, I shall continue to the fight for the freedom of my people. I am sure that my nation will emerge from this struggle, as it has done many times before in its history, as brave and as proud as she has been throughout the past," Beneš stated in a radio address to the world from Chicago. He also founded the first provisional political center of the Czechoslovak resistance. He called on all Czechoslovak diplomatic missions not to surrender embassies and consulates to Germany, but to continue to serve as Czechoslovak missions under his leadership.



Czechoslovak Republic Lives! This Is its New National Emblem! October 28, 1939, Poster by Vojtěch Preissig, member of the Czechoslovak resistance, captured and executed during World War II



Coming Up in 2020/2021

Live Online Events

- Alphonse Mucha 160** - The co-founder of Art Nouveau through the eyes of his great-grandson, Marcus Mucha
- Jan Smigtmator: Time to Swing** - live concert for Canada
- Karel Zeman: Baron Prášil (The Fabulous Baron Munchausen)** - film screening followed by Q&A with Oscar-nominated filmmaker and visual artist Ludmila Zeman, daughter of Karel Zeman

RCMP and Sokols Defended the Czechoslovak Mission

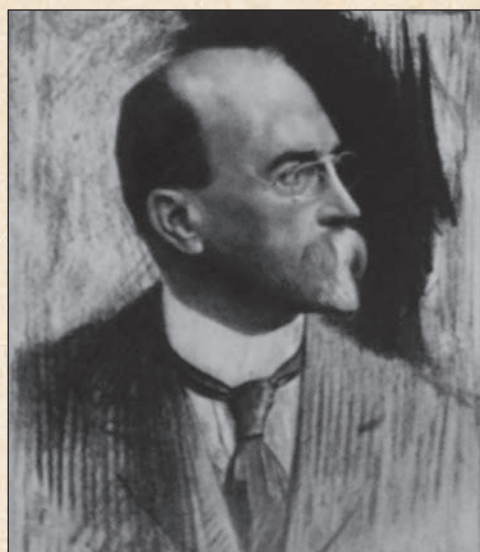
Following the instructions of Edvard Beneš, the Czechoslovak Consul General in Montreal, František Pavlásek, resisted the German attempt to take control of his office. He succeeded with the support of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police!

Members of Sokol protected the Consulate as well. The organization was founded in Prague in 1862 with the mission to promote physical fitness and intellectual development of its members and the nation. It quickly spread to Czech communities around the world, including to Canada. Sokols formed the core of the Czechoslovak army during World War I and were determined to the same again twenty years later. The Canadian Sokols were no exception.



CANADA STANDS BY THE CZECHS

The Canadian government never accepted the German occupation of the Czech lands. In fact, Canada was the first great power to recognize the Czechoslovak government in exile already on October 12, 1940. The Governor General's Order-in-Council of April 10, 1941 declared Czechoslovak citizens (pre-Munich Agreement) as citizens of an allied country. The CSNAC was also granted permission to establish the Czechoslovak War Charities Fund. Czech-Canadians took great pride in the appointment of Karel Buzek, Secretary-General of CNAC, as the Executive Director of the Canadian Relief Fund.



CZECH-CANADIANS COME TO AID!

Czech-Canadians took part in the creation of Czechoslovakia during World War I. When Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk asked them for help in the campaign for national independence, they responded enthusiastically. They raised funds and enlisted in the Canadian as well as Czechoslovak armies to fight for freedom in the war. They also helped put the new country on its feet after the conflict ended.

Czech-Canadians sacrificed a lot for their old country, yet only twenty years later all their work was lost. Seeing the nation's dream crushed, they, however, did not hesitate to come to aid again. Their response was immediate. Already on April 9, 1939, a four-member Czech-Canadian delegation visited President Beneš in Chicago and pledged him full support.

A congress held in Toronto on June 24 – 25, 1939 led to the creation of a Canada-wide platform for Czechs, Slovaks, and Ruthenians to join forces in the struggle for the liberation of Czechoslovakia. Soon the Czechoslovak National Alliance of Canada (CSNAC) had 91 branches all across the country. It became an important advocate of the Czechoslovak cause vis-à-vis the Canadian government, as well as the public. Its financial collections reached over \$330,000 (equivalent to more than \$5 million today). Czech-Canadians again volunteered to fight for freedom in arms.



A delegation of Czech-Canadians meets President Beneš in Chicago, April 9, 1939



Czechoslovak Day in Chatman, June 1941



Volunteers from Canada before departure to England

Help from Prague... in Alberta!

Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic, however, there is a Prague in Canada too! The settlement was established in 1904 in the middle of the Alberta prairies. To little surprise, it was founded by Czechs from Prague. However, they were not from Prague in Bohemia; the Růžička, Pail, Merta, and Klabzuba families came from Prague in Oklahoma, in the United States!

The town grew as more Czechs arrived from the U.S. as well as Europe. The people of Prague, Alberta took part in the struggle for a free Czechoslovakia during both world wars.

In 1945, Ann Martinovský wrote, "I am proud that even though our great-grandparents left Bohemia a hundred years ago, all our Czechoslovak descendants still speak Czech or Slovak. We are always proud to say that we come from the Czechoslovak race."



Senator Vojta Beneš and Karel Buzek in front of the Prague School

Czech Newspaper Ad, "200 million acres of arable land in western Canada for each settler."



Czech Pilots Over Canada

The Canadian government granted full support to the Czechoslovak Army mission, which arrived in Canada on July 2, 1941 to recruit volunteers for the Czechoslovak army. It also provided training grounds to Czechoslovak pilots serving in the Royal Air Force.

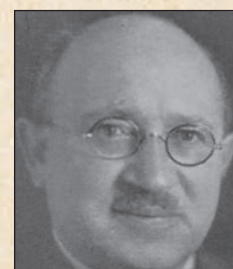
Czechoslovak fighters earned a high reputation for skills and bravery in the Battle of Britain. Josef František became the highest scoring non-British pilot. On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, a commemorative plaque was unveiled for Czechoslovak pilots in Vancouver on September 13, 2020.



Ambassadors Take the Stage

On the ambassadorial level, diplomatic relations between Canada and the Czechoslovak government were established on August 14, 1942.

Mr. František Pavlásek, who until then had served as Consul General in Montreal, became the first Czechoslovak Ambassador to Canada. General Georges Philias Vanier, future Governor General of Canada, became the first Canadian Ambassador to the Czechoslovak Government in London.



MR. PRESIDENT, WELCOME TO CANADA!

At the beginning of June 1943, President Edvard Beneš came to Canada on an official visit. He arrived on a personal invitation from the Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King. The statesmen met in Washington, where they were both included in the conference of the U.S. President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Churchill.

Although his country was wiped off the map by Nazi Germany, Dr. Beneš was received as a head of state on the highest level. On June 3, the Governor General of Canada, the Earl of Athlone, Prime Minister Mackenzie King and several Ministers came to greet him at the Ottawa railway station. Many Czech-Canadians gathered there as well to celebrate the arrival of their hero.

President Beneš first drove to Rideau Hall for his first meeting with the Governor General. He later arrived in the Canadian Parliament. He held a joint press conference with Prime Minister King and then had the opportunity to address both chambers of the Parliament. He was introduced by the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King,
Introduction of President Edvard Beneš,
Parliament of Canada, June 3, 1943

CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN ITS ENTIRETY WILL BE RESTORED! We look forward to the day, which we hope is coming speedily. The Munich Agreement has ceased to exist as a factor either in present or post-war relations.

H.E. Dr. Edvard Beneš has a career of public service that has been paralleled by very few men in the world's history. I should like to say to him how much the people of Canada in common with people everywhere who love liberty appreciate great services which Czechoslovakia rendered to the cause of freedom in the last great war and the great services she has never ceased to render to the cause of freedom since and in the present war.

Mackenzie King

President Edvard Beneš,
Address in the Canadian Parliament,
June 3, 1943

ALL CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE GREATLY INDEBTED TO CANADA! ...for the magnanimity with which she received Czechoslovak citizens who fled from their homeland in the past several years. They only followed their fellow countrymen who came years before to establish themselves permanently in Canada and are now faithful Canadian citizens and true Canadian patriots. I firmly believe that they will always serve to promote and strengthen our mutual understanding and friendship.

The Sympathy of the Canadian government and people for Czechoslovakia, expressed in words and deeds during the past four years, has been an encouragement and inspiration in this darkest period of modern Czechoslovak history.

Edvard Beneš

During his visit in Ottawa, Dr. Beneš was the guest of honor at an official dinner hosted by the Governor General, Princess Alice and Prime Minister King at the Government House. Several events took place at the Czechoslovak Embassy, including a dinner hosted by President Beneš for the highest official representatives of Canada. President Beneš also paid a visit to the airfield of the Royal Canadian Air Force at Uplands where he met not only members of the Canadian Army, but also Czechoslovak pilots in training with the Air Force. He was accompanied by Air Marshals Lloyd Samuel Breadner and William Bishop.

A series of meetings between President Beneš and Prime Minister King took place between June 3 and 6, 1943. When the time came to say goodbye, it was not only a farewell between two statesmen, but also two friends.

Prime Minister King noted in his diary, "Dr. Beneš is an honest man with a sincere soul and deep love for the people. The conversation with him gave me confidence in my own life and work, to see that our purposes and views were so completely one. It was like coming to a long-sought for land of promise to discover in Dr. Beneš a spirit so wholly kindred to my own."

A day after President Beneš's departure, Prime Minister King reconsidered his position not to run for re-election. "I shall be able to win and to round out a great career – based on principles, beliefs and actions like those of Beneš."

HAPPY ENDING. WELL, NOT FOR LONG...

the Czechoslovak Republic was free. Unfortunately, this was not to last for long.

The country soon fell into the Soviet sphere of influence. Communists seized control in February 1948. The totalitarian regime lasted for 41 years. During this time, Canada once again kept its door open to Czech refugees. Over the decades, they helped keep Czech democratic traditions alive and made a significant contribution to the development to Canada.

FREE & SIDE BY SIDE WITH CANADA AGAIN



Only the Velvet Revolution in November 1989 brought freedom and democracy back to Czechs and allowed them to renew relations with their friends and compatriots in Canada.

Cooperation between Canada and the Czech Republic has again become remarkably intensive in all areas, including security & defense, business, education, science & research, culture, and international advocacy of our shared values such as human rights.

Today, as during World War II, Czech and Canadian soldiers stand side by side in defense of the values of freedom and democracy. Czech troops currently serve under the Canadian command in Latvia under the NATO flag. The Enhanced Forward Presence protects allies on the NATO's eastern flank.

OTTAWA - MONTREAL
June 3 - 7, 1943



Edvard Beneš & Mackenzie King,
Canadian Parliament



Welcome to President Beneš at RCAF
airfield at Uplands



President Beneš with Air Marshals
Breadner & Bishop



President Beneš & Ambassador Pavlásek



President Beneš & Czechoslovak Pilots



President Beneš & Czech-Canadians



Motorcade of President Beneš in Ottawa



Departure from Montreal

Scratch a Czech, Find a Musician Underneath!

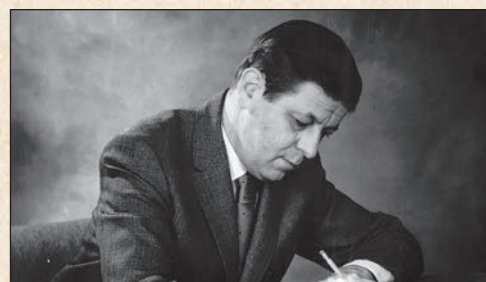
According to the old saying, Czechs seem to have special musical skills. Two composers who proved their talent in Czechoslovakia before World War II found refuge and their new home in Canada.

Jiří Traxler

Jiří Traxler was a songwriter, arranger, and pianist who co-defined the Czech swing music era during the First Czechoslovak Republic. His many hits include *Jedu nocí (I Travel Through the Night)*, *Bílé mraky (White Clouds)* and *Měsíc to zavinil (Let's Blame it on the Moon)*. Traxler's songs are still popular in the Czech Republic. They are performed in the original style by Ondřej Havelka & his Melody Makers, Sestry Havelkovy, and the Swings. In the 1990s, after many decades, these musicians reintroduced swing music to Czech audiences of all generations.

When Jiří Traxler visited his old country after the Velvet Revolution, he was moved to find that his music was still very much alive. "For the first time since the 1920s, I listened to early American dance music in a live performance, so faithful to the original that for a while I found myself suddenly back in the day when live challenges were different and more bearable." Later, Jiří Traxler even went on tour with Ondřej Havelka's orchestra. At that time, Sestry Havelkovy recorded an album in his honor called *Bláznivý den (Crazy Day)*, which contained his old hits.

Mr. Traxler was an inspiring man, not only when it came to music. His following thought seems to be relevant to the main topic of our newspaper: "Small, but ours! We used to say that with unsubstantiated pride about the Czechoslovak Republic. It sounded as if the smallness was some kind of merit. Then Hitler came and carved off Sudetenland. The country was still small, but ours, however, only till Hitler swallowed it as a whole. Later we received the Sudetenland back, however, our brothers in the East cut off Ruthenia and our homeland was yet smaller again. Plus, it was not even ours any more. There is nothing good about smallness! What is small, may be nice, however, citizens of a small country are not entitled to a good night's sleep. While they rest, great powers can make them someone's ownership for the sake of world balance at an international conference. Oh no, the homeland should be big, the bigger the better. It should also have as few neighbors as possible. In this sense, Canada seems to be the best choice."



Oskar Morawetz (Moravec) studied piano and music theory in Prague. At the age of 19, George Szell recommended him as an assistant conductor to the Prague Opera. With the growing Nazi threat, he was forced to leave the country in 1938. In 1940 he left Europe for Canada, where in 1946 he began teaching at the Royal Conservatory of Music. From 1952 until his retirement in 1982, he served as a professor of composition at the University of Toronto.

Oskar Morawetz

Oskar Morawetz created over 100 orchestral and chamber works. He is one of the leading and most-performed Canadian composers of contemporary classical music. He received numerous awards, including the Order of Canada and two Juno Awards for *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, and *From the Diary of Anne Frank*.

From the Ambassador, on a Personal Note

I have had the great honor to serve as the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Canada for a year. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many of our plans. For almost half of the year, I have not been able to travel, meet you in person, present distinguished Czech delegations, invite you to events, etc. However, I have been looking for ways to turn the current situation into an opportunity. Celebrating this year's Czech National Day in Canada online could be such an opportunity in more ways than one.

The 75th anniversary of the end of World War II left me in no doubt as to what should be the main theme of the celebration. During the terrible conflict, our friends and compatriots in Canada wrote one of the most impressive chapters in the remarkable tale of Czech-Canadian friendship. For forty years, the Czechoslovak communist regime tried to erase from our memory these pages filled with transatlantic solidarity, bravery, and sacrifice. Through social media, we can retell their hidden stories to a much wider audience. Our thanks can reach more families, whose members took part in the incredible effort that put Czechoslovakia back on the map of Europe.

I asked several special guests, Czech music stars, and members of Czech-Canadian community organizations to be part of our event. Everyone immediately said yes. I greatly appreciate their support and wish to thank all of them very much!

I hope that you will enjoy our program. I would like to believe that our celebration, in addition to offering an inspiring look back at Czech-Canadian history, could also turn into a unique memory of our Czech-Canadian present for the future.

If you find our program interesting, please, consider sharing my invitation with your friends. I would like to invite you to follow me and our Embassy on Facebook and Twitter. We will soon offer business webinars and more online cultural events. I am proud that Ludmila Zemanová, Marcus Mucha, and Jan Smigmator will be among our very special guests.

Bořek Lizec



Czechs & Canada Today



Official Representations of the Czech Republic
Embassy in Ottawa
Ambassador Bořek Lizec
www.mzv.cz/ottawa

Consulate General in Toronto
Consul General Petr Buriánek
www.mzv.cz/toronto

Honorary Consulates
Calgary - Honorary Consul General Jaroslav Jelínek
Charlottetown (P.E.I.) - Honorary Consul John Steinsky
Montreal - Honorary Consul Hynek Žikovský
Victoria - Honorary Consul Jim Reed, Honorary Vice Consul Lenka Storzner
Winnipeg - Honorary Consul Vladimír Hlas



Czech and Slovak Association of Canada
www.cssk.ca
Head Office: Ottawa
Branches: Calgary, Edmonton, Kitchener-Waterloo-Guelph, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg



Sokol
Toronto, Ottawa
www.sokolcanada.ca



Arts & Sciences
Art Without Borders Society (Vancouver)
www.artwoborders.com
Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (Edmonton)
www.svu-edmonton.org



Community Centers
Masaryk Memorial Institute (Toronto)
www.masaryktown.ca
Canadian Czechoslovak Benevolent Association (Winnipeg)
www.czechoslovakbenevolentassoc.ca
Asociace Hostýn, (St-Calixte, QC)
www.hostyn.org



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CzechInvest represented by Consulate General in Toronto
Investment Specialist Eva Jungmannová
www.czechinvest.org
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TOMÁŠ BAŤA, JR. & HIS FIGHT FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The globally operating Bata Shoe Company was a symbol of the economic success of the First Czechoslovak Republic. In the summer of 1938, when war was on the horizon, Tomáš J. Baťa decided to move across the Atlantic to Canada. The son of the late founder of the company, Tomáš Baťa Sr., was to establish a new plant, as well as technological development center. In the event of war, they were to serve as an alternative to the company's facilities in Zlín, Czechoslovakia.

After the personal intervention of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Mr. Baťa secured approval to bring 100 skilled employees from Czechoslovakia to Canada and, with their help, soon succeeded in his mission. During the war he served not only as the head of the company, but also as a member of the Canadian Reserve Army, an economic advisor to the Czechoslovak government in exile, and a special envoy of the British government to India.

When Tomáš J. Baťa first came to Canada, he was twenty-four years old. In his own words, he wanted to prove to himself and to others that he was capable of building and managing a Bata branch. He definitely did a lot more than that. From Canada, he rebuilt the entire global company and successfully led it through the difficult times of World War II and the Cold War.

When he was finally able to return to Czechoslovakia in 1989, he received a triumphant welcome and, as during World War II, was again asked to advise the Czechoslovak government on the reconstruction of the country. A journalist asked him whether he was Canadian or Czech; he replied, "I am both. I am a global citizen with Czech thinking."



Captain Tomáš J. Baťa on a gun mount made in the Batawa plant, 1943

Bata + (Otta)wa = Batawa

Tomáš J. Baťa and his colleagues not only built a new company in Canada, but also founded a new town. Batawa served as an important center of the Czech war effort. The company began to produce not only military boots, but other war equipment as well. A number of men left to fight for Czechoslovak freedom in Europe, while others enlisted in the Canadian Reserve Army and continued to use their skills in war production. The Batawa Sokol unit, as well as a CSNAC branch, were established. In 1941, the Bata Company pledged to contribute \$150 000 to the Victory Loan. By 1942, the company's employees had raised another \$14 200. On July 2, 1942, the town hosted the Day of the Allied Nations in the presence of Canadian Government Ministers Tom Crerar and Colin Gibson.



Minister Tom Crerar promotes Tomáš J. Baťa to an officer rank During the Day of the Allied Nations in Batawa.

Key President's Men & Their Memories of Canada

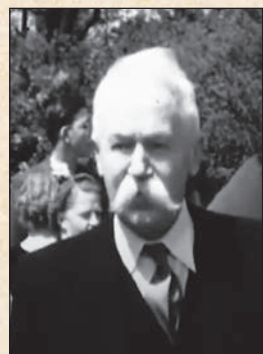
Jan Masaryk

Jan Masaryk was a son of the first Czechoslovak President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. During World War II, he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Government in exile. As the son of his highly internationally respected father and a charismatic speaker, he provided invaluable service to President Beneš during

his tours across Canada and the United States. He arrived in North America before President Beneš and immediately began to draw attention to the tragic fate of Czechoslovakia. He often delivered two or three major addresses a day.

"In the evening before our National Day, I think of you, Batawans. Your work for the victory of our just cause has been highly appreciated not only by us Czechoslovaks abroad and our London government, but also by our allies. You cannot imagine how pleased and encouraged I feel when British officials tell me after visiting Canada, 'The Baťa people are doing a great job!'"

Jan Masaryk, October 27, 1941



Vojta Beneš

Vojta Beneš was a brother of President Edvard Beneš. During World War I, he came to North America to gain support for the Czechoslovak liberation movement led by Professor Masaryk. During World War II he took on the same role, this time as former Czechoslovak MP and senator under the leadership of his brother. He

traveled to Czech settlements across Canada and played a key role in strengthening the CSNAC network.

"It is thanks to the CSNAC that today there is hardly a settlement in Canada that has not heard of Czechoslovakia, as well as a newspaper that does not support us. I will treasure my trips to Canada as beautiful moments of my exile. Not only did you, Czech-Canadians, invite me to your homes, but you also opened the door for me among Canadians. Rest assured that Canada and its people have grown to my heart like nothing else in these sad years."

Vojta Beneš, 1944

Bohuš Beneš

Bohuš Beneš was a nephew of President Edvard Beneš. He had a special relationship to Canada; before the war, he worked at the Czechoslovak Consulate General in Montreal. In 1938 he left Czechoslovakia with President Beneš, for whom he was personal secretary. In this capacity, he worked closely with the

President throughout his stay in North America in 1939. After the formation of the Czechoslovak government in exile, Bohuš Beneš became the director of its press department. In September 1942, he began serving as Czechoslovak consul in San Francisco.

"I was supposed to lecture to Czechs and Slovaks in Toronto. Little girls in national costumes greeted me at the door to an overcrowded hall. The Czech- and Slovak-Canadians sat on a horizontal bar, ladders and a balcony like a swarm of bees, roaring in support of Dr. Beneš. Suddenly I found myself in Czechoslovakia, which Hitler did not reach."

Bohuš Beneš, 1941



Czech National Day 2020

Online Celebration in Canada

Honoring Canadians & Czech-Canadians
Who Helped Save Czechoslovakia During World War II

October 28, 2020, 8 p.m. ET

Live Streaming

www.TogetherToVictory2020.com

Premiere of the Documentary “Together to Victory”

Greetings from Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament **Radek Vondráček**;
Minister of Foreign Affairs **Tomáš Petříček**; Entrepreneur **Thomas G. Baťa**;
Canadian Ambassador **Sara Hradecký**; World Figure Skating Champion, Former Canadian
Minister, Member of the Parliament & Ambassador to the Czech Republic **Otto Jelínek**;
Entrepreneur **Milan Kroupa**; Ambassador of Canada to the Czech Republic **Ayesha Rekhi**;
Director & CEO of the National Museum of Canada **Sasha Suda**; Former Deputy Minister &
Businesswoman **Georgina Sehnoutka Steinsky**; Entrepreneur **Tom Velan**; Oscar-nominated
Filmmaker & Visual Artist **Ludmila Zeman**; **Czech & Canadian Troops** Serving With NATO’s
Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia; **Czech-Canadian Community Organizations**;
Host of the Program Ambassador **Bořek Lizec**; & Many More

More Information & Updates

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Together to Victory



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Petr Janda

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Swing Music of 1930s & 40s
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