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BOOK REVIEWS

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Letters from Readers in the Polish American Press 1902-1969: A Corner for Everybody, Anna J. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, ed. Theodor L. Zawistowski. and Anna J. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, trans. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0739188729. 583 pp.

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From the Editor

Hugh L. Agnew

The issue you hold in your hands is a double volume, including content both for Volume 27, No. 2 (Spring 2014) and Volume 28, No. 1 (Fall 2014). It is approximately double the size of its recent predecessors as a result, and goes part way to bringing our publication schedule more into line with the actual calendar. That process will be furthered by the appearance, hard on the heels of this double volume, of Volume 28, No. 2 (Spring 2015), which will be a special number completely dedicated to Jan Hus in honor of the six hundredth anniversary of his death at the stake at the Council of Constance in 1415, guest-edited by Associate Editor Thomas A. Fudge. We hope to continue to catch up to “time’s wingèd chariot” in the subsequent months, and we thank all our readers and subscribers (and contributors) for their continued patience.

Thanks are also due to the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs, and its director Professor Peter Rollberg, for the generous support that made it possible to employ an editorial assistant, Joseph Albanese, in preparing this double volume and the Hus commemorative issue.

The scope of subjects covered in this issue reflects again the wide range of interests enjoyed by our members and contributors. Zdeněk V. David turns his attention to the criticism of Tomáš G. Masaryk’s ideas about philosophy, politics, and history expressed over his intellectual lifetime by the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka. The latter’s contribution to the intellectual and philosophical life of Czechs (and Slovaks) in the last part of the twentieth century might be seen by some to rival even his illustrious subject’s impact. After learning about Anthony Philip Heinrich in the previous issue of *Kosmas*, we welcome a study of the impact of Antonín Dvořák’s tenure as director of the National Conservatory in the United States on the American students with whom he came into contact, in particular with leading African-American musical figures of the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Though the *maestro* may not have totally succeeded in creating a “national music” for the USA in the way he had imagined, his impact was definitely significant, as Judith Mabary’s article demonstrates.

The next contribution shifts gears to another era entirely: Matej Jančošek provides a two-part examination of the sources for, and what we might conclude from those sources about, the so-called Empire of Samo, often referred to as the “first Slavic (or Czech, or Slovak) state.” We welcome him as a first-time contributor and hope to hear from him again. Gerald Sabo, S.J., continues his interest in Slovak literature and literary documents with a discussion of an interesting memorial to his deceased wife by the Slovak Lutheran pastor and poet, Pavel Šramko. This to us seemingly innocuous tribute touched off something of a literary scandal, when other Lutheran writers attacked Šramko for the sentiments expressed in the work. Yet, as Professor Sabo shows, he was also not without his defenders. The discussion is accompanied by diplomatic editions of some of the texts.

Anna Hájková brings us into the twentieth century with a discussion of an engaging drawing created in the Terezín/Theresienstadt concentration camp by Lotka (Charlotte) Burešová, which gives her an opportunity to reflect on the transnational nature of the communities created in the camp and their later impact. Two other contributions concern the experience of the post-February era in Czechoslovak history. In a study thoroughly grounded on archival sources that she has either donated to, or will donate to, the Czech National Archive, Mary Hrabík Šamal discusses the activities of the Republican (Agrarian) Party in exile during the early years following the coup of February, 1948, when its base of operations was in Paris. In the second of these contributions, Kathleen Geaney provides a fascinating discussion of the life experiences of British-born women who married Czech and Slovak military men during the Second World War, and then followed their husbands to their new homeland. As one might expect, these experiences varied widely, and the window into a little known aspect of the social history of the era is fascinating.

Miloslav Rechigl continues his contributions detailing the achievements of Americans of Czech, Slovak, or Bohemian ancestry to the culture of the United States. This time his focus is on women in arts and letters (which he expands to include sports and broadcast journalism). He has produced an encyclopedia on these themes, under the title *Czech it Out: Czech American Biography Sourcebook*. And finally, Tracy A. Burns provides an essay on one of my favorite expressions of the quirky Czech sense of humor and self-deprecation, the Divadlo Jára Cimrmana. Book reviews by Karla Huebner, Tracy Burns, Mary Hrabík Šamal, and Míla Šašková-Pierce round out the contents of this volume. Suggestions for books to review, as well as offers to review books received, may be sent to Mary Hrabík Šamal, *Kosmas* Book Review editor, at her email address, maruska48@gmail.com.