

# Summary

## JAN MASARYK (Reflections on his death)

### Jan Kalous: Jan Masaryk (1886–1948)

The text briefly introduces the personality of a popular Czechoslovak politician, prominent diplomat and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Jan Masaryk was influenced by the environment where he grew up and moved (his father was an university professor and later the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic T.G. Masaryk). Together with President Edvard Beneš he enormously contributed to a reconstruction of the Czechoslovak Republic after the Second World War ended. During the February crisis in 1948 he did not tender his resignation and remained in the Gottwald Government. He died under the unexplained circumstances on 10 March 1948.



### Lubomír Boháč: The Case Masaryk in the Course of Time

The study is based on a critical analysis of the preserved file documentation of official investigations conducted in the years 1948, 1968–1969 and between 1993 and 1996 which only exceptionally refers to the literature devoted to this subject. Analysing the source material, the author deducts that the investigations were not objective as it were subject to direct or indirect political pressures (1948; 1968–1969) or to political atmosphere of that time (1993–1996).

Concrete conclusions of individual investigations are explicitly based on testimonies selected for a certain purpose, supporting a version selected in advance. The proof of evidence which was in contradiction with such version or disputed it, was in principal ignored. Fortunately, it was not destroyed but remained preserved in the archive funds.

Its analysis led the author to a conclusion that Masaryk's death was not a classical suicide, let alone a demonstrative one, nor even accidental death but an act of violence.

Undoubtedly, there was, of course, a strong motivation to commit a suicide due to self-reflection and a hopeless situation which undisputedly prevailed over the reasons to leave the republic. It would have probably occurred anyway, but before it could happen, Jan Masaryk was liquidated by violence.

It was an act organized from the outside as Stalin was more cautious than Gottwald and Masaryk represented a serious potential danger for him. His violent death brought about large complications to the Czechoslovak communists for it discredited Masaryk's engagement in February 1948, compromising it.



### Jiří Kocian: The Death of Jan Masaryk

A tragic death of Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Masaryk remains unexplained until now. There still exist a couple of versions how to answer the question what happened early in the morning on 10 March 1948 in a service flat at the seat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic in the Černín Palace in Prague. How did Masaryk's body appear on the courtyard pavement?

A lot of competent, and for various reasons, interested authors such as investigators, historians, journalists, eyewitnesses and others have been trying to uncover this mystery. Three basic possible causes of his death were determined:

- 1 Masaryk was murdered;
- 2 Masaryk decided to commit suicide;
- 3 Masaryk died after he fell down out of the window by accident.

This study is based on the information published in a number of historical, journalistic and biographical publications as well as in the press. I draw also on the information obtained whilst studying selected sources of the Archives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic in Prague or source materials of the National Archives in Prague. I also have taken into account a number of recurring theories of thorough investigations into this case carried out since the early 1990s by the General Prosecution Office of the Czech Republic, the Office of Documentation of the Crimes of the State Security, and subsequently the Office of Documentation and Investigation of the Crimes of Communism in Prague. During a number of the latest enquiries attention was aroused by an expert opinion of professor J. Strauss from the Police Academy of the Czech Republic. Through his biomechanical explorations professor Strauss has come to a conclusion that Masaryk's fall was caused by external force exerted by one or more persons.

While I studied the relevant documentation in the Archives of the Ministry of the Interior, my attention was engaged in a 1951 file called "Investigations into the causes of the death of Jan Masaryk". Basically, it was a summary and also a sort of revision of many contemporary and important results of the investigation into the

case of Jan Masaryk's death carried out by the State Security (StB) agencies and other departments within the Ministry of the Interior from March till September 1948 but also some of the results of investigative acts made by the StB agents as regards to another criminal case between 1950–1951. Each investigation report contained in this 1951 file was provided with an opinion on these reports which refer to concrete discrepancies and omissions resulting from the then impossibility to submit some of the missing materials from the original investigation carried out in 1948.

This investigation, which closed early in October 1951, resulted in a specific proposal to complete the investigation into the case of Jan Masaryk's death. In the final comments of the file text it was stated, among other things: "True investigation into the case of Jan Masaryk's death can be considered very desirable from the political and international point of view."

The objective of my contribution is not only to repeat or summarize well-known facts mentioned in dozens of publications or known reports. The purpose is to point out to certain observations made on the basis of the 1951 reviewed results, and to compare them or classify them into the known facts, but it should be noted that in the period of open repressions and extensive unlawful acts such investigation was pursued for a certain purpose.

Not only on the basis of the well-known facts but also because of the psychological condition of Jan Masaryk himself, influenced by the progress of power changes in Czechoslovakia, and considering the internal political and international connections at that time, the author tends to prefer the version of Masaryk's suicide, whether voluntary or contributed. He also tried to clarify this position in his study.

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### **Josef Lesák: Attention Given to the Death of Jan Masaryk**

In 2004 I became a member of a group of authors to develop a collection regarding the death of Jan Masaryk on 10 March 1948. The group consisted of people of various professions, diverse experience and different opinions in respect of Masaryk's death. I am very grateful for this task. I take it my duty to give testimony for myself and for my friends about the crimes of communism.

This year 57 years have passed since Czechoslovak post-war minister Jan Masaryk died. None of the actors of this drama are still alive. The number of eyewitnesses has been rapidly declining. However, it was a historical act full of terror and sorrow or even a mystical warning – *Mene tekel* to all the nation – that a half century after, people in our country and abroad as well are still interested in it.

As early in 1948 in a cellar of the Pankrác prison I learned from Miloslav Choc (before his execution) the name of a potential murderer or a participant. In 1968 I volunteered to be a witness to the General Prosecution Office.

Early in the morning on 10 March 1948, when the coroner inquest of Masaryk's body had scarcely begun, the Minister of the Interior Václav Nosek claimed quite resolutely that the death had been due to a suicidal jump out of the window of his flat. State funerals for important politicians usually take place between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> day after their death. Nevertheless, Jan Masaryk was buried as early as on 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

(Why in such a hurry?)

What is admirable is a testimony of JUDr. Joseph Görner. Originally he was the chief of the Criminal Police Headquarters, later the head of the Archival Administration Department. Although he was the first among those present to reach Masaryk's corpse, he had to relinquish further investigations to StB departments. By protocol he condemns their careless investigation. The handling of important evidence is irresponsibly neglectful and finally, the evidence completely disappeared.

Experts attention will also certainly be drawn by a change of the body position of the dead still before taking photographs and making a plan of the scene.

Thoughts necessarily come into your mind in respect of injuries and biological traces on the body of the dead mentioned by a number of witnesses, and their subsequent denial by other witnesses later, in some cases even after twenty years.

Attention should be paid to the Statement of the General Prosecution Office made on 6 June 1991, a clear effort to quickly remove evidence of the real murderer of Major Schramm whose name was Jurin Hosek (or Hošek *alias* Václav Bauer) as testified by M. Choc, or practically no response by the court to this information provided by Choc, or to identical statements of Miloslav Choc, Slavoj Šádek and Jiří Červenka, respectively, that three men, not two, ran away from the scene of murder.

The most significant chapters are Chapter 'Summary' and 'Suspects of the Murder'. Not only by thorough studying of archival documents, but also through experience of my own or my closest friends I persuaded myself how easy it had been for the StB agents to obtain and fabricate a testimony and proofs, or just not to establish the guilt and simply to sweep it away, if the Party wished to.

Therefore, the approach of persons who are not lawyers but were subject to repressions or underwent martyrdom of the StB investigation rooms which were full of class hatred and revenge of politically conscious judges or prosecutors (let alone the elite of omnipotent "intelligent supermen") can be an advantage and an asset.

I did not fight against communists 42 years. For over a period of almost 30 years of work in the underground of Kladno mines and after I personally went through the experience of prison and the labour camp, finally, I have won a large number of friends among the old honest communists. But I warn everybody against communism. It allures but concurrently threatens. Lies and crime beneficial to communism have then turned into “truth and an act of merit”.

It is necessary to fight against communism. We have to amend the work of Václav Havel, a man with great credit, who did not answer the calling of the victims of communism:

To dissolute and ban! Let's go our Czech path! Communism never more!

### **Zdeněk Šedivý: The Murder of Jan Masaryk**

This study is conceived quite differently by the author – from the point of view of a journalist, publicist, and director of Radio Free Europe, since 1957 living outside the republic, in the USA. The author does not describe only that tragic night in the Černín Palace from 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> March but he concentrates on less known facts that could throw light on a mysterious death of the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs.

After the events of November 1989 a number of allegations emerged concerning a partisan commando that was supposed to be headed by a popular partisan Josef Vávra-Stařík. The commando was supposed to break into Masaryk's flat and seized the material which was to compromise him. The communists intended to use this material in order to force Masaryk to collaborate on behalf of the KGB (Russian State Security Committee). Certain circumstantial evidence, not conclusive, indicate that the commando could have been in the flat. But the question is when? And under which circumstances?

Shortly after 10 March 1948, i.e. after the death of Jan Masaryk, the commando members left the Czechoslovak Republic. One of them was a communist Vilém Krajčírovič who at first returned home for his wife and a son but his wife refused to emigrate with him. In France he immediately stowed away on a ship bound for the United States. After his arrival there he was arrested and imprisoned because of his membership in the communist party

In the United States, however, his uncle William Kray lived who vouched for Krajčírovič, and so the emigration authorities released him. Krajčírovič then adopted the name of his uncle. After he learned that his wife had made a divorce with him, he married again. In 1968 he arrived to Vienna to meet his sister and offered that he was willing to give his testimony about “one tragic night in the Černín Palace”. His offer, however, met with an absolute lack of interest in Prague. Vilém Krajčírovič-William Kray returned back to the United States.

Another twenty years passed. The *velvet*<sup>1</sup> authorities considered the case of Jan Masaryk as closed by the State Security in 1968. It took another few years before the Office of Documentation and Investigation of the Crimes of Communism was charged again with investigating Masaryk's death. One of the Interior Ministry officials authorized to conduct investigation into Masaryk's death came to America. However, it turned out that he had arrived only for a visit and an informative discussion. Again, there was lack of interest to find out anything about Jan Masaryk's death.

Vilém Krajčírovič-William Kray was a pensioner at that time. He received a monthly rent, the so called “Social Security”, paid by the United States Government. So he had had his registration number already since he had become a resident of the United States, i.e. five years before he became an American national. Even though he changed his name, it was a matter of not weeks, but a few days at the most, maybe only hours, to find the whereabouts of Vilém Krajčírovič-William Kray. He could have been easily found. And it was no need to make him give his testimony. He clearly manifested his willingness to do it in 1968 and did not change his decision.

Vilém Krajčírovič-William Kray was killed in the gas explosion in the house where he lived. He was the only victim. Official circles in Prague immediately addressed the American Police and asked for a thorough investigation into the incident. Suddenly they knew where the eyewitness of the events of 10 March 1948 had lived. But the lack of interest became a decisive factor, which is also demonstrated by another case.

Jefim Fištejn, the head of Radio Free Europe, made a statement that a man had called him who had introduced himself as Leonid Paršin. He told that his mother had worked as an NKVD agent (Russian secret police) in Czechoslovakia, and as a Soviet resident, she had had a task to control liquidation of Jan Masaryk. According to Leonid Paršin, Masaryk was murdered by the NKVD agents on the orders of Moscow. Nobody reacted to this information given by Fištejn. Lack of interest again. Leonid Paršin lived with his mother in Moscow and their flat was a place of appointments of officers – illegals who recalled the years they spent in Prague.

More than ten years had passed since Fištejn's announcement when in March 2002 a Russian journalist Galim Kajumov made a statement. In his work, via the agent Boris Nalivajko, this journalist again came across the name of Jelizaveta A. Paršina who worked in Czechoslovakia under the cover name Kudláčková. Kajumov

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from the so called *Velvet Revolution* in 1989 (note by the translator).

met Jelizaveta Paršina who described him friendly meetings with a former Major General Michail Bělkin and other agents who operated in Prague. During these meetings Major General Michail Bělkin said that it had been him who together with Captain Bondarenko had thrown Jan Masaryk out of the window. Bělkin as well as Bondarenko are not alive any more. Bělkin played an important role in the Czechoslovak history. And besides, he supervised the sovietization of the Balkans. Everything he did, he did on Stalin's orders.

It should be noted that suicide has been excluded by forensic biomechanics and psychiatrics. Biomechanical exploration has proved that the fall was due to exertion of external force. Two persons may have participated in the fall. This biomechanical analysis confirms the words of Major General Bělkin, Captain Bondarenko or an NKVD agent Captain Jelizaveta A. Paršina.

The author is convinced that the fact cannot be ignored that the NKVD members such as Major General Bělkin, Captain Bondarenko or NKVD agent Captain Jelizaveta A. Paršina admit, although only in the circle of their close collaborators, their participation in one of the largest tragic mysteries of the Czech modern history – in liquidation of Jan Masaryk.

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### **Antonín Sum: The Sacrifice of Jan Masaryk**

The contribution prepared by JUDr.<sup>2</sup> Antonín Sum, a former secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Masaryk.

Antonín Sum was arrested in 1949 in connection with the political trial of JUDr. Milada Horáková and sentenced to serve 22 years in prison, most of the time in uranium mines.

After his release in 1962 he worked as a chimney sweep until 1969, then for a short time as a secretary of the Central Committee of the National Front of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and in construction of the Prague Metro. Since 1970 he worked as a researcher, and later as a scientific expert on the environment in the Research Institute of Construction and Architecture where he wrote and translated several books.

After 1990 he also wrote, among other things, a couple of books about the life and death of Jan Masaryk, summing up a number of testimonies and memories of the friends and contemporaries of this important and popular man.

Antonín Sum, just like everybody from among the closest circle of Jan Masaryk's collaborators, is firmly convinced and has no doubts about the fact that the death of Jan Masaryk on 10 March 1948 was a consequence of "his own personal decision, though extremely difficult for him, to protest like this against unlawfulness and terror of communists in his country. And primarily, it was an urgent warning to his friends and the West against growing efforts and threats of communism to take control of Europe and the world."

Many of Masaryk's friends – especially Sir Winston Churchill and American State Secretary George Marshall – understood this, and so a year later, in April 1949, the defence Atlantic Pact was formed (also an international school was founded and in Geneva a small memorial to Jan Masaryk was built up).

The sacrifice of Jan Masaryk on 10 March 1948 has thus become one of the impulses towards saving Europe and our, that is Czechoslovak (Czech) – freedom, and a membership in the Atlantic Pact as well as in the European Union.

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### **Ilja Pravda, Jan Kalous: The Summing up of Results of the Investigation into the Death of Minister J. Masaryk**

On the basis of a written request of 9th February 2001 submitted by Masaryk's Democratic Movement I examined, as an ÚDV investigator, the circumstances of the death of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic Doctor h. c. Jan Masaryk.

By examination, and primarily on the basis of expert opinions from the area of criminology – branch of forensic biomechanics, as well as the health service area – branch of forensic medicine, I have come to a conviction that Jan Masaryk was murdered. Because of the very long interval between his death and my examination, it was not possible to identify the offender of the criminal offence and I had to discontinue the criminal investigation suspecting murder under the appropriate provisions of the Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Nevertheless, if the reasons for discontinuance are no longer valid, the prosecution can be initiated any time in future.

The study briefly outlines conclusions of individual investigations into Masaryk's death between 1948–2004. There are three basic versions of his death: suicide – misadventure – murder. The reason for various and different versions of this event lies in the initial poor work of the State Security in 1948.

This first investigation (1948) was finished as a suicide.

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<sup>2</sup> Abbreviation for 'Doctor of Laws' (note by the translator).

The investigation carried out between 1968–1969 admitted two versions: a suicide and misadventure; but it unambiguously excluded a murder.

The investigation between 1993–1996 ended up with the following version: a fleeing Masaryk fell down from a window sill (the commando carried out a house search in his flat).

Between 2001–2003 another investigation was conducted which completed the case as a murder with a participation of another person or persons (according to an expert opinion from the forensic biomechanics branch).

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### **Ilja Pravda: The Chronological Framework of the Events which Occurred in January and February 1948**

The source for developing a chronological framework of the two months of 1948 in question was the contemporary Czechoslovak press from the Archives of the National Library of the Czechoslovak Republic. The selection of particular events in relation to the personality of Jan Masaryk illustrate well and characterise the atmosphere of that time. Front page newspaper coverage as well as the news which seem to be in the background might have had crucial importance for the events to come. Within the chronological framework of those days, events on the national and international scenes are shown which mutually influenced one another, playing thus a key role when looking backwards into the past of the history, uncovering many things and reflecting unexpected connections.

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### **Lubomír Boháč: Literature On the Subject**

The alphabetical list of more than 200 domestic and foreign publications, newspaper and magazine articles regarding the subject of Jan Masaryk's personality and his death, as well as materials published in reaction to the expert opinion of professor Strauss and to the results of the ÚDV investigation of 22 December 2003. The list was updated by the author in December 2004.