

## **Virtual Archive of Central European History Speech of President Masaryk, 1928**

From: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/history/faculty/kelly/archive/welcome.htm>

**Source:** *Czechoslovak Sources and Documents, No. 4*, "Speech of T.G. Masaryk, President of the Czechoslovak Republic on the Tenth Anniversary of the Attainment of the Country's Independence," 28th October, 1928, (Prague: Orbis, 1928).

### **Speech by President Masaryk\* on the Tenth Anniversary of Czechoslovak Independence, October 28, 1928**

I heartily thank you for your friendly wishes and I share your ardent desire for the welfare and successful development of our beloved Republic!

You have noticed, Gentlemen, the Castle Guard in legionaries' uniform. Henceforward this uniform will be worn as a tribute which we pay to the Allies, to whose victory, friendship and endeavours to bring about a juster political regime in Europe we owe in such large measure the restoration of our State; in this way the Castle Guard will serve as a reminder to future generations that freedom cannot be won and maintained without the greatest sacrifices. Our State was restored because our constitutional rights were recognized by the Allies and because the nation at home and abroad placed itself in opposition to our adversaries and to the upholders of the old regime and the old Europe. We fought in the Allied armies; our legions formed constituent parts of the forces in Russia, France and Italy, and our citizens volunteered for service in the Serbian, British and American armies.

Not long ago we erected in Prague the Wilson monument yesterday the Denis monument was unveiled; we are, and shall remain, grateful to the Allied nations for the assistance and friendship which they have manifested towards us also since the War.

Today, however, I do not wish to recall the World War and its results and consequences; today we must make clear what we have accomplished since the War by our own efforts, we must draw up a balance sheet for ourselves, examine our consciences, and resolve upon further work.

It is ten years ago since the emancipated nation took into its hands the administration of its own affairs; it is ten years ago since the conclusion of a struggle that lasted not for four years but for centuries, a struggle against foreign rule, misrule and servitude; a struggle which was part of the universal striving for a better, freer and more democratic world order. We cannot fail today to remember all those who before us awakened the nation and during the period of Austro-Hungarian oppression were our models in the process of de-Austrianization. I feel happy that in the series of celebrations we have honored the memory of the father of the nation and of our foremost political teacher. In

addition to Palacký, I am constrained to pay a tribute (even beginning only with Dobrovský), to a long line of national awakeners and emancipators; I wish to mention at least one more, one from among the artists Smetana. We can never be sufficiently grateful for what by means of his music he achieved on behalf of the political stiffening of his beloved musical nation.

We remember with respect those who by passive resistance or in warfare sacrificed their lives in the struggle against the Habsburg Monarchy; we remember the defenseless nation's stubborn resistance which culminated in the bloodless, successful revolution of that glorious 28th of October ten years ago. The centuries-old programme of the Czechs and Slovaks was a great striving for justice and right; it is ten years ago since the corrupt moral order was regenerated by the efforts of many generations.

Ten years is a brief span in history, but means much in the life of men. When I returned home ten years ago to the emancipated Republic, I used words which forced themselves to my lips - I said that it was like a fairy tale. As I look back today on those first ten years, I would say again that it is like a fairy tale-a miracle. We began with empty hands, without an army, without constitutional traditions, with a rapidly falling currency, in the midst of economic chaos and the universal decline of discipline, with the heritage of Dualism, with irredentism within our frontiers, and in the midst of States shaken by upheavals from the Right and from the Left; handicapped by small resources, unaccustomed to govern, little inclined to obey, and almost unknown to the world. And yet we have stood the test and acquitted ourselves with honour; we gave the restored State a Constitution, we organized the administration and the army; we faced the economic depression, the nationalist struggle, and the international conflicts. Our tasks were heavier than we admitted to ourselves; and yet we have built up a State which enjoys the confidence of foreign countries and-what is still more important-of ourselves, of us all. After this testing-time of ten years we can quietly continue our creative political work. It has been a successful period of development; it has involved much patient work, and therefore let us remember with gratitude all those who have given their collaboration and have not been afraid to take upon themselves responsibilities. Above all let me not forget the Prime Minister, Antonín Svehla, who is lying ill; after ten years of friendly cooperation I can well estimate his statesmanship and devotion to the Republic. You will certainly agree that we should send him hearty greetings and our best wishes for a speedy recovery of health.

Further, let us remember those able collaborators who have left us- Stefanik, Rašín and Tusar. Each in his own field of activity achieved a great piece of work for the consolidation of the Republic.

Today the State is no longer something apart from ourselves and opposed to us; nothing prevents us now from organizing it on the best possible lines. We have a country which has been made rich and beautiful by Nature and human labour; we have gifted and industrious peoples which can learn a great deal from one another and which by Nature and history are destined to harmonious collaboration; and we have a history which imposes upon us the duty of rising to higher levels. These ten years of peaceful, strong

development have shown that our territory can look after itself and that its inhabitants are capable of independent State life; our State has acquitted itself, and will continue to acquit itself, with honour in the world race for human progress. That which we have so far accomplished is given to us order that we may maintain and perfect it; that which we have so far left undone it is our duty to accomplish. Let us learn from our mistakes; he who forgets the lessons of bad experiences will lose the opportunity of having good experiences. During the past ten years we have all gained greatly in experience.

The building up of a truly democratic Republic is an act of great faith: faith in right and justice, faith in a historical mission, faith in the future. We have this faith and therefore we can revive the spirit of joy and love with which we stood ten years ago on the threshold of our own home. We were more unanimous then; today, however, there are more of us. We saw paradise on earth before us at that time but heaven on earth is never completely realized; it exists in us as good will, mutual service, a thirst for justice and above all as active love towards our fellow-citizens and towards all people of goodwill. We have our State in order that in it we may strive for the attainment of the best regime, I might say for the Kingdom of God; I believe that, although we are often unaware of it, we are being led towards that goal by destiny, Providence.

This unbreakable optimism of mine is not blind or uncritical; I believed even before the War in the possibility of a restoration of our State, and I was constantly engaged in reflecting upon the problems which we should be obliged to solve. I have made good use of my four years abroad and of my ten years in office as President; I have tested my theories, I have observed political personalities and conditions at home and abroad, I have estimated our capacities, and I have reflected upon how to distribute work most effectively; I have never hesitated according to need to give expression to my views and their foundation, and therefore I will say today what I consider to be right and needful for the further development of the Republic. I know that the majority of people do not like to be roused from their political dreams by the indication of stern reality; the successful development of States, nations and mankind is not controlled, however, by wishes alone, but also by hard facts. A considerable field of activity is allotted to ideas and ideals; individuals and nations are to a great extent the creators of their own future, and it has already frequently and correctly been said that in the long run it is the idealists who always win. Yet the victorious ideas and ideals are not born of fantasy and indifference to facts.

In the first place I wish to point out the fact that during these first ten years we have succeeded by our foreign policy in gaining recognition, in Europe and, I may say, throughout the world; we are a small State, but smallness of size does not exclude world significance. The Czech question, as I have always believed, is a world question, and the Czechoslovak State must follow a world policy. It is doing so. We are compelled to follow a world policy owing to our geographical position and historical development.

Our position in international politics is not only honourable but also good; yet we must attentively watch the development of post-War Europe and the entire world, for the peaceful adjustment of Europe means a great change of States and their mutual relations.

Not only the victorious but also the defeated States are developing, and we are affected to a very considerable degree by their development.

We cannot expect the provisions of the Peace Treaties to be accepted everywhere and by everyone without objections and protests. I myself unhesitatingly admit that the Peace Treaties require certain elucidation; but this must be done openly and honestly. Hostile propaganda and the use of untruths and direct lies will not bring about any adjustments. In political life, both external and internal, there are always many amateurs and dilettanti- -amongst them there are naive and honest people who disturb public opinion by their reason and unreason. This year we had an example of such dilettante methods in the wild propaganda against the Peace Treaties. Under cover of the watchwords of peace, people of this type stir up discord and by their prejudiced endeavors to bring about a revision of the Peace Treaties they dangerously strengthen the hands of the upholders of political chaos. Treaties bought by the blood of millions are not scraps of paper. It is no exaggeration if I say that from the outset, from the signing of the Peace Treaties, we have genuinely striven to come to an agreement with our neighbours and to further universal peace and the consolidation not only of Central but also of the whole of Europe. After so exhausting a war, all States, even the victorious ones, require quietness and peace in order to repair the great damage. After the World War pacifism is not only a virtue but also a vital necessity.

The sense of international solidarity is extending and becoming deeper; the World War was truly world-wide and afforded a proof that all nations form and should form a harmonious whole. At the same time, however, the World War strengthened national consciousness, and one of the chief consequences of the War was the emancipation of the smaller European peoples that were oppressed by the old regime. Inter-State relations and international life presuppose the existence of nation-conscious peoples; the development of our nation after the loss of State independence was mainly in the direction of a deepening of national and, at the same time. Slavonic consciousness, because the smaller Slavonic nations were not free and independent politically. Today the Slavonic nations are independent; our national programme can and must be practical, and the programme of the revival of Slavonic reciprocity will be based on the principle of friendship towards the other nations.

I will not deal with the individual problems of foreign policy. Our jubilee, as I have already said, reminds us that we must think above all about our home politics. I will say only that our attitude is friendly not only towards the Allied nations but also towards those against whom we fought in the War. And I desire to add that we sincerely wish they, as well as our former Allies, may succeed in surmounting the difficulties caused by the War.

Our political task is to build up a democratic Republic. People are speaking and writing all over the world about a crisis in democracy, a crisis in parliamentarism. What does it all mean? What is the course of political events in Europe after the World War?

The World War became a profound revolution which continued the great political change begun by the revolutions of the 18th century. Everywhere was accelerated the transition from aristocratism and absolutist monarchism through constitutional monarchism to democratism. In a word: government by all takes the place of government by one individual.

Properly speaking, one individual can never govern alone and cannot govern without political training and a knowledge of the art of administration; thus in addition to the monarch there arose various bodies of trained officials. In a monarchy the power was inherited, the officials were appointed by the monarch or inherited their office; in a democracy the government is decided by election. Hence the importance today of the electoral system. According to it, and of course according to the general cultural level of the citizens, democracies are of various kinds, such as the British, American, French and Swiss democracies and the Germanic and Latin national and racial types. Which type do we Slavs form?

Government of all by all, so that every citizen can repeat the phrase of the French despot: "L'Etat c'est moi", or more modestly: "I also am the State"-this is the problem of democracy. The development of monarchism lasted for many thousands of years, whereas that of democracy dates only from the end of the 18th century; hence modern democracies are incompletely developed and really are only attempts at democracies. It is not surprising, therefore, that many sup-porters of the old monarchist regime, which through its absolutism maintained peace and the privileged position of the aristocracy, are opponents of democratism which endeavours to bring about necessary changes in the social order by constant reform and in extreme cases by revolution. Hence here and there a return is effected to absolutism, to a dictatorship. Amongst us also there were found individuals and fractions of parties who played with the idea of a coup d'etat and a dictatorship; the stupidity and fiasco of these attempts I may take as a proof that the overwhelming majority of our citizens no longer believe in absolutism and its' dictatorship.

I have followed the interesting proceedings of this year's Inter-Parliamentary Union, in which 37 Parliaments were represented. The discussions dealt with the disputed questions of modern democracy. There is now an immense quantity of political literature on all the problems of modern democracy. I am no longer a professor and therefore it is not my duty to bring forward all these problems and the suggestions for their solution; I will restrict myself to what is important for our democracy.

Thus if democracy in present-day cultural conditions necessarily means government of all by all, it follows that owing to universal suffrage non-specialists, laymen so to say, enter the Government and Parliament, for in a democracy a Parliament elected by the people is the source of all State power. I am not speaking against this, for it is the essence of democracy. In a monarchy the whole of political life was restricted to the monarch and a narrow circle of his chosen advisers; the administration was carried on under the direction of the monarch by a bureaucracy of officials. It was said of French king that he reigned but did not govern; truly monarchism fell through the dualism of monarchism

and bureaucratism Of course, not even monarchism and the hereditary principle provided a guarantee of ability and expert knowledge.

Dualism exists in every form of State and has passed democracy, in which Parliament (the Lower House and Upper House) and bureaucracy stand side by side and opposed to each other. Hence it is a vital problem of democracy to bridge over and harmonize this dualism which originated in history and by the nature of things. Democratic tendencies are unfettered; a return to aristocratic absolutism is impossible, and therefore nothing remains but to solve the difficult problem of democracy. The leadership and administration of the State demand the services of political and administrative experts. Two and two make four also in political life.

I am a convinced democrat and I accept the given difficulties of democratism; there is no State form without defects., and this is in the nature of things. Our difficulties arise from the high demands of democracy which requires a body of citizens who are truly educated in the political sense and an intelligent electorate, both men and women. Hence I am not in favour of government by experts or by officials. It will not do any harm if I say that I have not been on principle in favour of a Ministry of Officials. I say this expressly against those who owing to ignorance on the matter have made assertions to the contrary. But of course we have already had two Cabinets of Officials: What does this signify? It means that for us also the transition from monarchism to democracy is a difficult one, and that democracy is truly a great task, a great problem. Problems, however, are solved by people who think and possess knowledge and are not merely elected that is the crux of the matter!

Be it noted that our Parliament, disregarding the protests of fractions and parties, is wise enough to facilitate political continuity and tradition; we have repeatedly had Svehla Premier, Beneš as Foreign Minister, and Udrzal as Minister of National Defense, and also non-Parliamentarians such as Cerny, Englis and Beneš are accepted as Cabinet Ministers. In a democracy, and especially in a body of citizens who are politically and culturally backward, there is always political agitation and party conflicts, but in the long run reason and reflection must prevail. Stated politically, an elected parliament must of necessity recognize the need of expert knowledge; that this is already the case in Czechoslovakia is one of the reasons why we may await the future with confidence and quiet minds. It remains an open question, I admit, whether this recognition was given in a correct form and how it is to be constitutionally settled so as not to remain merely a temporary expedient in untenable situations.

Political experts recommend many methods whereby the dualism of Parliamentarism and control by specialists, of Parliament and bureaucracy, may be harmonized, so that the necessary contact between Parliament and the government offices, between politicians and officials, may be safeguarded. There has been some talk in this country of introducing the office of permanent Secretaries of State according to the English model. The English permanent Secretaries of State truly form intermediary links between Parliament and the government officials; they are chosen from the officials. There are certain difficulties, but the matter is still under consideration.

It will not be out of place if I draw attention to the English institution of Parliamentary Secretaries who are chosen from among the Members of Parliament. This institution is also remarkable; it is concerned with the same question of harmonizing the dualism of Parliament and bureaucracy.

I should like also to point out the possibility of making use of experts in Parliamentary Committees; the Deputies need not have any feeling of shame, for democracy contains within itself the dualism of which I speak. Moreover, this year Parliament has made use of the advice of non-Parliamentary experts in the question of social insurance. To be sure, the institution of Parliamentary Committees, which correspond on the whole to the various Ministries, constitutes an attempt to introduce the special knowledge that is essential in politics and in the administration. President Wilson drew attention to the growing influence and predominance of committees in American parliamentary life.

Democracy has a problem also regarding the functions of the President; the short history of our Constitution is rather interesting in regard to this question. During the first joyful beginnings of democracy little thought was given to the functions of the President; I myself, with the assistance of Minister Svehla, defined these functions in the Constitution. But the matter is not expressed with clearness in the Constitution, as has been proved by the discussions on the constitutional validity of this my address on the occasion of the present jubilee celebrations.

In general, our Constitution and first laws were conceived, formulated and codified necessarily in haste; they contain a fairly large number of inexplicit passages and even errors. In addition to this, all laws are really only in skeleton form and are intended for their time and for special conditions hence there is everywhere a natural demand for laws to be supplemented, amended and revised. But it is a sound policy, not to alter laws in a hurry and on the spur of the moment; time is required before they are firmly established. Let us not forget that even the best laws remain a dead letter if there is no vital spirit and habit among the body of citizens; England is a special and unique example of this, for they are a parliamentary democracy with a monarch, a Constitutional country without a written Constitution, a legally governed country with a conglomerate of laws of all ages, including the most ancient times.

I have already said more than once and I shall continue to repeat that politics is leadership and that democracy therefore has its constant and urgent problem of leadership, that is, it has to train and educate leaders, without whom no organization of the masses and indeed of the whole people is possible. Hence democracy means constant training for, democracy; hence the responsible and splendid task of journalism in democracy.

The education of the electorate and their parliamentary representatives must be self-education and self-training; in a democracy every citizen is a legislator and administrator, but for that very reason the democratic administrator and legislator must himself obey the laws in an exemplary fashion and he must maintain order which he achieves through the State administration. We do not make laws only for other people to obey, we make them also in order to obey them ourselves.

Democracy seeks to protect itself against absolutism by a division of powers; it is well known that theoreticians in Constitutional law and also practical politicians find serious difficulties in this matter. In the long run democracy is nothing but self-government, the self-government of the body of citizens as a whole and the self-government of each individual citizen. In a democracy the demand for self-government and autonomy is self-evident; when in a State which has a fairly large population composed of dissimilar national and cultural elements all have to share in the government and administration, the division of political power according to the given differences of the population is desirable. We are taught this by our own short Constitutional development. I have always demanded, therefore, and quite deliberately, self-government and territorial autonomy of the so-called qualified and, corporative type, for a State, and particularly a modern State, cannot give up the centralized form of organization; harmony, centralization and the provision of autonomy are the tasks of the modern democratic State. Democratic centralization is not absolutism, and the provision of autonomy does not signify atomization or anarchism. Autonomy is justified by the historical development of States and by the grouping together of varied units in an organic whole; the necessary State unity does not mean uniformity.

If I refer to the study of the Constitutions and political life of other countries and especially of the democracies, I do not forget the differences in our State which are due to history and to nature. The chief fact is that we are a mixed State from the point of view of nationalities and languages; other States, indeed all States, have national minorities, but in Czechoslovakia the minorities are of another character. There is no uniform solution for the problem of national minorities; each minority presents a special problem of its own. With us it is a question above all of the relation of the Czechoslovak majority to our German citizens. If this problem is solved, it will be easy to solve the remaining language and national problems. Fate ordained that in addition to the Czechs and Slovaks in our State there should be a considerable German population which has long been settled in this territory, there are States whose total population does not exceed that of our German minority, and our German fellow citizens are on a high cultural and economic level. I have often spoken and written on our German problem, and it is one of the most important problems with which we have to deal. I repeat and emphasize what I have said before, namely, that everything in the nature of Chauvinism must be excluded from our political life—of course, on both sides. Not only our Germans, but also and in equal measure the members of the other and smaller national minorities are now our fellow-citizens, and therefore they shall enjoy the rights of democratic equality. It is obvious that he who desires to have equal rights must loyally fulfil equal duties and must respect the Constitution and the laws. No one who places himself outside and above the law can be entrusted with a share in the administration of the State. The minority problem is a universal one in Europe, for there is really no State without minorities; the State as a conscious organization is something different from nationality and race, for owing to historical development State frontiers and ethnographical boundaries do not coincide. But it is true that in modern times nationality has become a powerful political factor, and therefore the minority question is, and will certainly continue to be, a subject of discussion at Geneva.

In a democracy the representation of minorities is a necessity. In any case, it is the duty of the majority, which according to the democratic principle of the majority gives its character to the State, to win over the minority to the State. I regard the entry into the Government of two German Ministers as a happy beginning of a definitive agreement.

A modern State is constantly extending its functions; in proportion as society is divided into classes and various corporations, the need for centralization, i. e. the organic unification and organization of all work, becomes more urgent. This political individualization is connected with the fact that since the 18th century the population of all countries has been increasing. There is therefore an increase in the number of social functions, and States are becoming more complex in character; hence the need for unification, amalgamation, division and organization of functions and work. The absolutism of the old regime was, and is, inadequate for this purpose.

A new State, in particular, increases its administrative functions in economic and social development. Intensive economic and social development is one of the special features of the modern age; today every corporation and every individual must pay increased attention to economic and financial welfare. The same applies to the State. This increased attention to economic activities need not be unjustified materialism; love for one's neighbour is ultimately the sense of social solidarity and should not be merely the profession of love but active work for one's own good and the good of one's neighbours. Love for one's neighbour-humanity in democracy-is not mere philanthropy and almsgiving but the determination to enable every citizen to have a decent livelihood by means of legislation. Democracy is not only political but also economic and social. A few days ago I received a manifesto from politically educated citizens of various parties; I was gratified by the declaration that our State must be one in which national and social justice is enthroned, just as our foreign policy must be a consistent policy of peace.

Since the War we have been fully convinced of the importance of economic and social policy; let us be grateful to all those who by their sagacity and patience brought about the stabilization of our currency and enabled our industry and commerce to compete successfully on the world market.

In view of the universal endeavour to improve economic and social conditions, industry, and especially big industry, is becoming a great social power and can directly and indirectly exert influence upon Parliament and the Government. It is the duty of true democracy to be independent of financial rulers. In Czechoslovakia, it is true, we have not the great and powerful industrial undertakings such as exist in other countries; up till now factories in this country are more like workshops and the banks are like small Savings banks. Herein lies a certain guarantee of Security; but a man can live on shaky foundations also in humble circumstances.

Competition on the world market compels our economic system to adapt itself to world conditions; we require not only a world policy but also agriculture, industry and banks run on world principles. In this connexion I have read with interest what the chief director of our biggest bank recently said about the tasks of our industry-he complains of the

shortage of industrial leaders The modern manufacturer, commercial man and financier is a pioneer. Everywhere in politics and industry, and of course also in the spiritual and cultural fields, there is a crying need for leaders.

Today States and their economic activities cannot be isolated; in all branches inter-State and international relations are increasing. Hence we see how important and of course difficult are the negotiations for commercial and other inter-State treaties and how this growth in inter-State relations renders necessary mutual concessions. I recall with gratitude the fact that this year our Czech and German manufacturers have united to pursue their common interests.

It is not by chance that everywhere today the improvement and extension of communications form one of the main demands of industry and of the State administration; the international spirit makes it imperative for us to have good main roads, to construct modern hotels for the accommodation of the visitors to our beautiful country, and in general to know how to be hospitable.

The importance of economic and financial development and the growth of inter-State economic relations signify a demand for a well-thought-out and systematic commercial policy. We particularly need such a policy because we must be prepared for crises and difficulties. In his last survey Dr. Beneš rightly drew attention to this not only with reference to the political but also to the economic sphere. Our commercial policy must succeed in the same way as our foreign policy has succeeded—we must fit our Republic into the economic and financial organization of the world. Hence in addition to the stabilization of the currency there arises the necessity for a just taxation policy, a reasonable Customs policy, and a cautious fixing of the bankrate.

The Government will issue extensive reports on the work of the individual Ministries; in them will be found a due estimation of the important Land Reform and of the great cultural work of the building up of the school system in Slovakia where, before the national revolution of ten years ago, there was not a single Slovak State school. Today there are in Slovakia over 4.000 schools, and of these over 3.200 are Slovak schools. Apart from the Land Reform, this provision of Slovakia with schools is the greatest accomplishment of our Republic. Also in Carpathian Ruthenia educational life is beginning to show visible signs of improvement. I will not enter into details as to the tasks that have already been accomplished and those that still remain to be fulfilled. It will suffice if I mention the tendency which we must follow in Czechoslovak policy.

I should now like to add a word about the great modern task involved by public health policy. As I have already said, the population in all countries is increasing; the important question, however, is not so much the birthrate as the number of those who survive. We desire to have descendants who are healthy and strong physically and mentally. Like other countries, we have a Ministry of Public Health, but it ought to be much more important and its activities ought to be more intensive. I am glad to make use of this opportunity to thank the Rockefeller Foundation for its donation to the State Institute of Hygiene and the American nurses who have taught us and have strengthened in us the

conviction of the importance of nursing the sick. I follow the hygienic tendencies of many Countries; I have arrived at the conclusion that our medical men are excellent in diagnosis but pay somewhat less heed to therapeutics. In England and America the opposite is the case. I hope that the new generation of doctors will effectively combine diagnosis with therapeutics and that thus the whole of medical science will not only be humanized but that hygiene and preventive measures will be universally supported and carried out effectively by all authorities concerned.

I gladly mention the meritorious peace work of the Red Cross and I gratefully recall the assistance which America has afforded us in this direction.

It is a gratifying fact that since the War and with the help of the State there has been an active development in the building movement; and due attention has been paid to modern hygienic demands. Dwelling accommodation is as necessary as food for everyone.

What should be said about the urgency of a correct educational policy? Let us bear in mind that our schools have to give education to over two and a half million pupils and that the elementary schools alone are attended by 2,200,000 children

Demands for educational reform are being made throughout the whole world. What are we, the nation of Komensky, doing in this matter? I fear that other countries are in front of us. Just as a new State has new and complicated tasks, so also schools have to be reformed in consequence of changes in society and of its complexity. The demand is often made that schools be adapted to the requirements of life, that is, new life. Certainly the chief thing is that the schools should prepare young people to understand their position correctly when they begin to earn their own livings; the schools must teach them to think and show them how to fulfil, in agreement with theory, the various tasks which life brings to them. The school is not concerned merely with individual branches of knowledge but with the unity of all knowledge. It is a question of a sound education and of the necessity for schools not to turn out semi-educated people owing to the slogan for the popularisation of knowledge. Hence educational reform involves the question of the training of teachers. The demand for better education means an increased expenditure on schools and teachers of all categories; this expenditure, however, is a sound investment. It would not be right if I did not here emphasize the need for instruction to be given in foreign languages; this is required in view of the growth of international political and economic relations. According to Komensky, we should, for practical reasons, learn the language of our neighbours, and this applies above all to German. In Slovakia a knowledge of Magyar is useful.

I recall an anecdote about a certain Minister of Education who said, in reply to a deputation that requested better education for young people, that he had anxieties not about the education of children but about that of adults. Yes, that is the vicious circle, that is the eternal antagonism between the old and the new generations, between fathers and sons.

I will say only a few words concerning the army; I spoke extensively about the main problem not long ago. We must have an army as long as all the other countries have armies; the necessity for this arises from the present stage of moral and economic development. Our army must be democratic (the relations between the officer and the private) and it will be used only for defensive purposes; we have no aggressive plans. But we shall defend ourselves, our liberties and cultural possessions, with all determination and, I believe, manfully and bravely. The State is organized power and we desire therefore to be powerful; I do not thereby make an appeal to force and violence. Power and strength are something different from force and violence.

Ultimately we must depend upon ourselves and upon our internal strength, as Havlicek courageously told us. "God helps those who help themselves" is a fine saying; we trust in the good will and assistance of the Allies and of all honourable nations, but above all we rely upon ourselves. Hence from the outset we have troubled the Allies as little as possible with requests for assistance; with our own efforts we have delivered ourselves from the evil situation caused by the War; we are paying the debts which out of humanity we were obliged to incur in order to feed our population and abolish the evils which we inherited from the enemies of the Allies and of our ourselves.

In the course of time and evolution all nations assume individual aspects and develop social classes and party life; thus, in our country, from the original Old Czech party other parties split off and became independent. We must reckon with social differentiation. We must also reckon with the fact that some fractions and parties will be opposed to the Republic and to democracy, whether they have Utopian and unpractical programmes or programmes that are based more or less upon violence and anarchism. In any case we can have faith that there will always be a Constitutional majority, a coalition resting not only on economic interests but also on the political principles of democracy. I base my trust on the valuable experience of the Coalition after the War, on the fact that the Socialists took a share in the government. A coalition is only another word for that which in foreign politics we are endeavouring to attain through the League of Nations and other, now fairly numerous, inter-State and international institutions. I believe in peace among the nations, but this peace begins with peace among the citizens of individual States.

Our Republic arose from the world conflagration and from revolution; after the revolution we had the task of building up the State by means of careful, detailed, daily work. This is the natural course of all great political events, of all revolutions. Man cannot always live at fever pitch, for the heroic mood lasts only for a short while; after it there ensues a period of quiet and pacification. However, this period of quiet and pacification must not degenerate into one of indolence and weakness. True enthusiasm-enthusiasm for right and justice in the nation and throughout the world-never ceases, but it merely turns to other means, and the most effective means is well-directed work.

A restored and new State requires creative work. We have a suitable slogan: "De-Austrianize", but man is a creature of custom and thus it happens that after a burst of great enthusiasm and the making of big plans many people return to the condition from which they started.

Our work in the first ten years, I admit, has in many branches been more extensive than intensive; but this will be put right, and we shall use the experience we have gained for further improvement and progress. "Our salvation lies in work and knowledge" I gladly quote this saying of one of our meritorious national leaders.

If we are to carry out this policy of work and knowledge, a policy which is truly cultural, we must collect all the forces at our disposal; hence it is necessary that our women, who form half the population, should be brought into public life. The so-called Women's Question is a burning one; in reality, it is a question mainly of the middle classes, for our farmers and workers, the mass of the population, do not feel this question so keenly. To me it is a surprising fact that our government and other public offices do not offer posts to women, especially when it is a question to a large extent of the wives and daughters of officials.

I do not conceal the fact that in some circles there has been a certain amount of discontent. There is no agreement with those who on principle are opposed to the Republic and to democracy; and there is no agreement also with those who are dissatisfied because the revolution has not brought them more than it has done. The revolution produced the "new rich", but to day, as I hear from the experts, all of them have for the most part lost their money owing to their abnormal speculations. They have lost it in the same way as they acquired it. There are, however, also political upstarts who speculated politically and even on a revolution; they also are unmasked today, for their shouts of nationalism have not brought them any advantage. Finally during the past ten years we have become better acquainted with people in political work and we no longer allow ourselves to be misled by the wrapping up of incapacity in bombastic watchwords concerning nationalism, morality and religion, progress and the revolutionary spirit, etc.

From this discontent I distinguish the discontent that has been called Divine. The restored State brought with it new and difficult tasks, and decent people placed in responsible positions are dissatisfied because they conscientiously ask themselves whether they are capable of fulfilling the tasks committed to them. I understand this nervousness and these doubts regarding the choice of the right means, and I comprehend the desire for better things. From these noble efforts arise disputes, and especially the disputes which concern questions of tactics and are carried on under present circumstances by the organized political parties. It is true that the disputes sometimes become an immoderate and noisy struggle.

I observe all the unhealthy features and I have been and continue to be on guard; but the great majority of the citizens, I make bold to declare, correctly estimate our great revolution, are aware of their duties and do not fear the given difficulties. It is no small task to rebuild a State and to maintain that State; our position in Europe and the world and the development of Europe in an obviously transitional period impose upon us many difficult tasks in all branches of cultural effort. I do not doubt that we shall accomplish all the tasks that are incumbent upon us on account of our history and the legacy of our ancestors.

The majority of the citizens understand also that we must not expect everything from the State and its officials; in addition to the State organization, there is the natural organization of nations and there is the organization of the whole of civilization, and these organizations ultimately decide the destiny of States.

In this respect democracy is better placed than the old form of State. Democracy is not only a form of State but also a method of the whole of public and private life. It is a view of life; the essence of democracy is the concord of people, their peaceful association, love and humanity. A successful home and foreign policy and enlightened political leadership presuppose the consent of the citizens to the main views and tendencies in political initiative. The State is not merely a mechanism and politics are not merely a skilful administrative and diplomatic technique; the State is the association of the citizens on rational and moral foundations. If the life of individuals has meaning only *sub specie aeternitatis*, this applies also to the political association of those individuals. The State has a more profound meaning than appears on the surface in the medley of individual political actions. The State has a spiritual meaning, a moral meaning.

The theoreticians of the old form of State used to express this truth by the formula of the Divine Right of Kings; the close connection of the State with the Churches was a practical expression of the moral significance of the State. I believe that democracy, like the whole life of individuals and nations, is dependent upon the grace of God. This meaning of the modern State often fails to be properly understood because it arose out of resistance to and revolution against the old regime, against monarchism which claimed exclusive-ness by Divine grace, and against the Churches exploited by absolutist monarchism. Hence there arose in many countries a widespread demand for a separation of Church and State. In my opinion, the programme of the separation of Church and State should not take the form of a struggle against religion. Through the separation of the Churches from the State, the Churches and the State should become independent, so that each by its own power and in its' own way may serve the highest ideals of mankind.

Institutions are not enough for true democracy; it needs people who believe in the mission of their State and nation, people who are united by an idea. The technical training of officials and troops is not in itself sufficient for our democracy. Our democracy is the vital moral task not only of the officials and troops but of all the serious-minded men and women citizens, and above all of their political representatives and leaders. Our democracy must guarantee and protect all cultural efforts in the technical and economic fields and in the spheres of science, art, morality and religion. Therefore our democracy must be constant reform and constant revolution, but a revolution of heads and hearts!

\*Biography of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, by T. Mills Kelly

Born: March 7, 1850

Died: September 14, 1937

**First President of Czechoslovakia, 1918-1935**

Member of Parliament (Austria), 1891-1914

Professor, Charles University

Perhaps no other figure in Czechoslovak history is as recognizable as Tomáš Masaryk. Born on 7 March 1850, Masaryk obtained a doctorate of philosophy and married Charlotte Garrigue, an American music student, in 1878. A professor at the Czech University of Prague, Masaryk was a social and political critic. From 1891 to 1893 he was a member of the Young Czech Party and from 1900 to 1914 the leader of the Realist (Progressive) Party and deputy to the Austrian Reichsrat from 1907-1914. During his political career in the Habsburg Monarchy, Masaryk worked hard for universal suffrage and the federalization of the empire. During World War I Masaryk worked abroad to secure Czech and Slovak independence, gaining Entente and American recognition for the Czechoslovak National Council. In 1918 Czechoslovakia gained its independence and Masaryk was elected the first president of the new state. He resigned in 1935 and died on 14 September 1937.

Copied with permission from the Virtual Archive of Central European History

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/history/faculty/kelly/archive/welcome.htm>

Contact T. Mills Kelly for questions about the Virtual Archive of Central European History:

[tkelly7@gmu.edu](mailto:tkelly7@gmu.edu)