

"IT WILL ALL BE DIFFERENT"

A Czech Looks Back At Europe

ALTHOUGH the programme which 2YA will broadcast on Sunday, October 27, at 2 p.m., is a celebration in music of the Czech national day, its author, Frederick Turnovsky, cannot help but remember that by only one month will it avoid commemorating the anniversary of Munich.

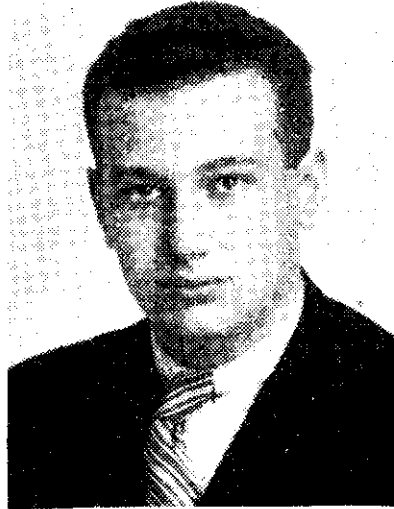
The programme tells the story of the incessant struggle of the Czechs for independence, and their unceasing suppression by other races surrounding them in their incongruously bordered country in Central Europe. Until 1918 they had for 300 years been consistently Germanised. Their language was disappearing, their national customs were almost forgotten. But during the European renaissance, of which the French Revolution was the first symbol, the Czechs, stubborn resisters, managed to write their language into textbooks, and their folk stories became a sure basis for future development when that became possible. In their music, folk music played the same part, ennobled by Smetana first and then Dvorak into an instrument as powerfully patriotic in its different way as Masaryk's independent spirit.

This is the story that Mr. Turnovsky, a young Czech now living in Wellington, has told in his script.

Another Story

There is another story, and this he told to *The Listener*. Not until after the Germans had entered Prague after Munich did he leave Czechoslovakia. "No, it was not easy," was all he would say. But he was able to come out to New Zealand, and he brought with him a first-hand knowledge of what was happening in Europe. Once here, he was able to consider European affairs more objectively.

The conclusions he has reached through a logical view of the illogical European situation are as pessimistic as Ignaz Friedmann's (reported elsewhere in this issue). His enthusiasm for his country's tradition of freedom, his chuckling delight in such characters as *The Good Soldier Schweik*, the ideal of all Czech obstructionists, are at variance with what he sees, and has seen happening in Europe.



FREDERICK TURNOVSKY
One story now, another next Sunday

He said that he did not think it possible to expect of this war that it would result, as the last one resulted, in a re-orientation of national boundaries. It was impossible to conceive of a Czechoslovakia established as it had been.

Peace, Money and Food

He agreed that we in New Zealand, with no experience of any other race having with us a common border, simply could not understand the depth and feeling of racial hatreds and rivalries in Europe.

"Peace, money, and food," these were the only things he could believe the common people of Europe would want after the war. They would no longer be interested, he suggested, in geography. And if any geographical peace treaties were imposed, as they had been imposed last time, he could not see them solving the problems.

"It will all be different," he said, and that was all he could say.

Pessimism and Optimism

As a Czech patriot he voiced the pessimism of a people who must by now almost have given up hope of ever realising the ideals of a national sentiment nourished in so much hardship for so many centuries. As a student of European affairs, he voiced the uncertainty that amounts almost to optimism in the hope that "it will be different."

He voiced a fear that this "different" order would be some superimposition of force over war-exhausted peoples living only for the scarce necessities of life in the war-made chaos. And he voiced—without putting it in so many words—a hope that the "different" order would be a fusion of peoples brought about by the commonality of starvation, suppression, and misery.

His programme is an argument for an inspired national spirit. All through European history the Czechs in Bohemia, with few interludes, have been crushed beneath foreign oppressors. A less hardy spirit of patriotism would have been lost

in the years. On all sides the boundaries of Bohemia are contiguous with the boundaries of hostile races, and even within those boundaries there have always been hostile minority elements. And yet, as listeners will learn graphically from this "Epic Story of Czech Music," as the programme is called, they have survived death and burial to keep alive a vague troublesome thing called patriotism.

The Good Soldier Schweik

Mr. Turnovsky's eyes lit up with laughter when he spoke of Jaroslav Hasek's book "*The Good Soldier Schweik*" (now available in English as a Penguin Book). He had been talking of the sturdy refusal of the Czech people to acknowledge their conquerors. "That is how they do it," he explained. Schweik the obstructionist, seeming to be so magnificently stupid, and yet so effective in his objections to a foreign-made military machine, typified the things the Czechs were doing now, still, to register their protest against the invasion of their country and their customs by Germany.

Mr. Turnovsky, the objective critic, feared and hoped that national boundaries could not and would not be revived. Mr. Turnovsky, the Czech, thought of Schweik, and thought with no little delight that even now the Czechs were busy doing their best to follow Schweik's example. Mr. Turnovsky, the author of 2YA's programme next Sunday, has no doubt that music, and Schweik, and Czech patriotism are very interesting things.

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