

MARTIN NEKOLA

RL

RADOMÍR LUŽA
"STORIES OF OUR CZECHOSLOVAKS"

TOMÁŠ PÁNEK



THE CZECHOSLOVAK TALKS

Prologue

The main purpose of the Czechoslovak Talks project is to collect, process and publish true stories of Czech and Slovak compatriots around the world—stories of personal ups and downs, opportunities and obstacles of people, whose life experiences should not be forgotten but preserved for future generations. The Czechoslovak Talks will publish a comic book edition on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Czechoslovakia. The project, called „Stories of our Czechoslovaks“, will be presented in a comic book form and will include selected life stories of Czech compatriots from around the world (USA, Canada, South America and Australia).

The selection of characters whose stories will be portrayed in this comic book is based on recommendations from compatriot organizations and also by compatriots themselves. We would greatly appreciate any ideas and recommendations. The publication of the comic book is partly funded by the Dotek Endowment Fund.

The project can be financially supported in the form of a donation that we will use to cover costs related to the publishing of the book. Your financial support can contribute to the publishing of this beautiful comic book “Stories of our Czechoslovaks”.

If you need more information about the project as well as on how to donate, please contact directly the Project Coordinator of The Czechoslovak Talks, Mrs. Martina Kanakova:
m.kanakova@czechoslovahtalks.com



1922—2009

Radomír Luža was a son of Lieutenant Colonel Vojtěch Luža, hero of the Czechoslovak Legion, which fought battles in Zborov and Siberia during the World War One. His father was murdered by the gendarmes after the German takeover and occupation, and the boy, Radomír, was imprisoned by the Gestapo.

He later joined the resistance, commanded a Guerrilla Band, and brutally avenged the death of his father. After the war, he became a Youth Official of the Social Democratic Party, studied law, and continuously drew public attention to the spreading danger of Communism. He graduated from the Masaryk University in March 1948 and, only two weeks later, escaped to Austria. He offered his services to French Intelligence. He returned to Czechoslovakia illegally several times to perform various tasks. He barely escaped arrest and the State Security came to consider him a dangerous enemy. He recruited new agents in exile and traveled around Europe. He studied history and participated in the publication of the Testimony quarterly, one of the most important exile periodicals.

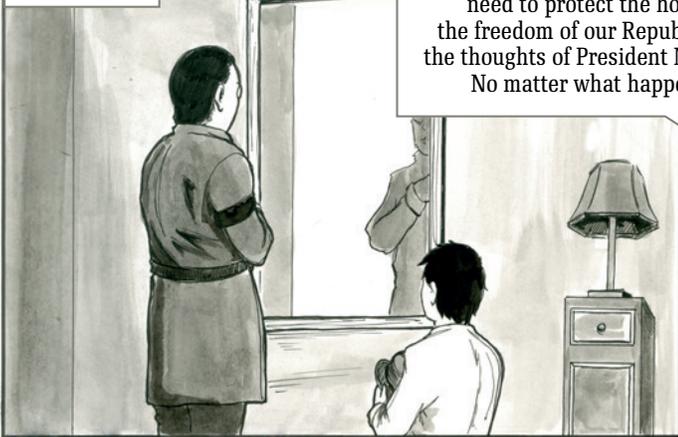
He settled in Paris first, but he moved to the USA with his wife in 1953, when the risk he might be kidnapped increased. In the 1960's he went to Austria and worked in the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY), which mirrored youth unions of the Communist Bloc. After returning to the USA, he pursued his academic career, teaching modern European history in New Orleans and writing a number of highly regarded papers. As one of only a few émigrés after 1948, he was alive when the Iron Curtain fell and had the chance to visit his “liberated” Czechoslovakia again.

Radomír Luža

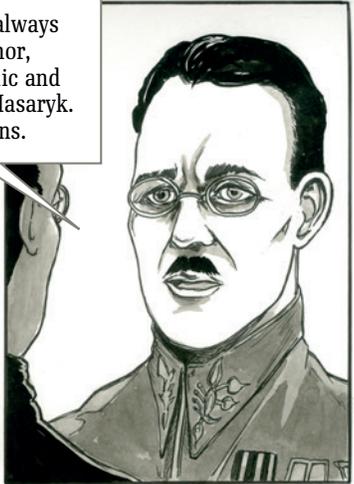
**Prof. JUDr. PhDr.
Radomír Luža**

Radomír Luža entire life reads as a thrilling novel. Following his father, a hero of the Czechoslovak Legion and general in the Czechoslovak Army, he was a loyal defender of Masaryk's ideals. He changed from a High School student to a partisan and warrior, fighting against the Nazis. After 1945, the Communists were his adversaries. He became a spy, an editor, an exile leader and a respected historian. He was also always trying to overthrow the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia. After its collapse, he visited his homeland several times but did not return to live there. After the death of his beloved wife, Libuše, in 2001, Radomír moved to Pennsylvania to be close to his daughter. He passed away on November 26th, 2009, at the age of eighty seven.

Praha, 1927



Remember Radomír, you always need to protect the honor, the freedom of our Republic and the thoughts of President Masaryk. No matter what happens.

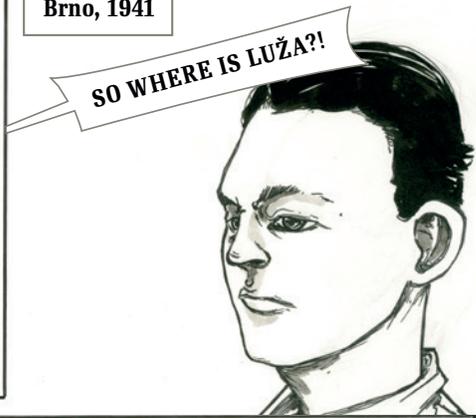


Can you promise me that?

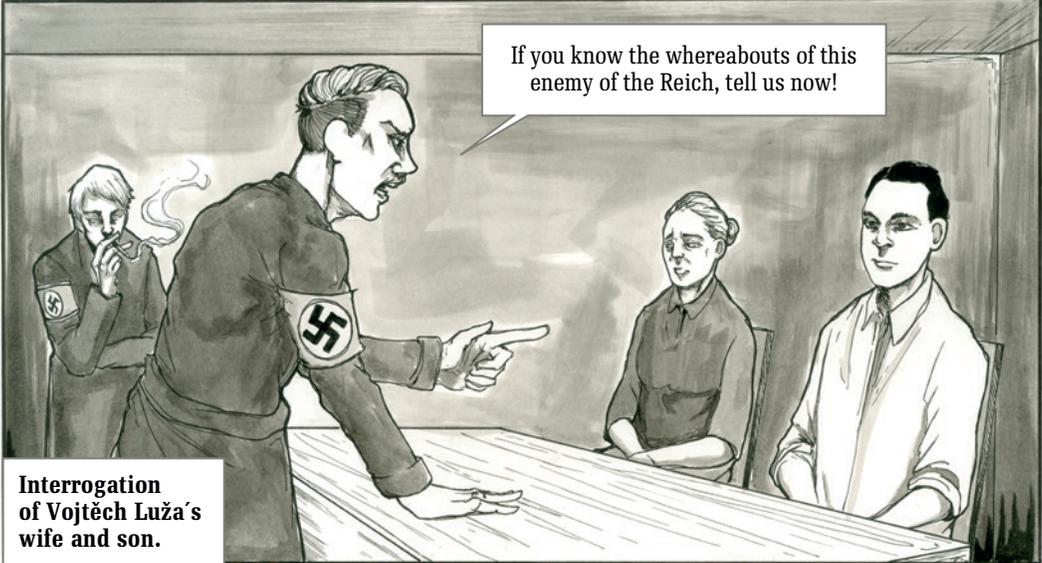


Yes, Papa. I want to be like you!

Brno, 1941

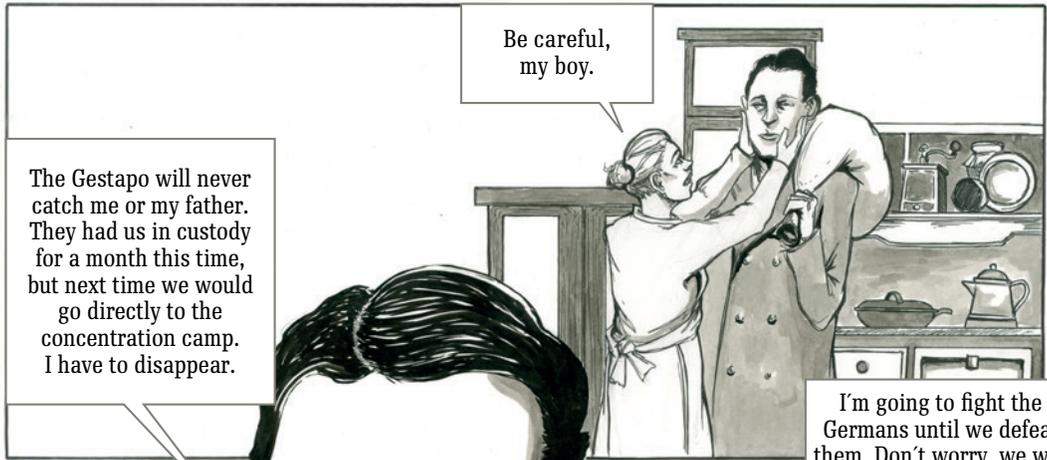


SO WHERE IS LUŽA?!



If you know the whereabouts of this enemy of the Reich, tell us now!

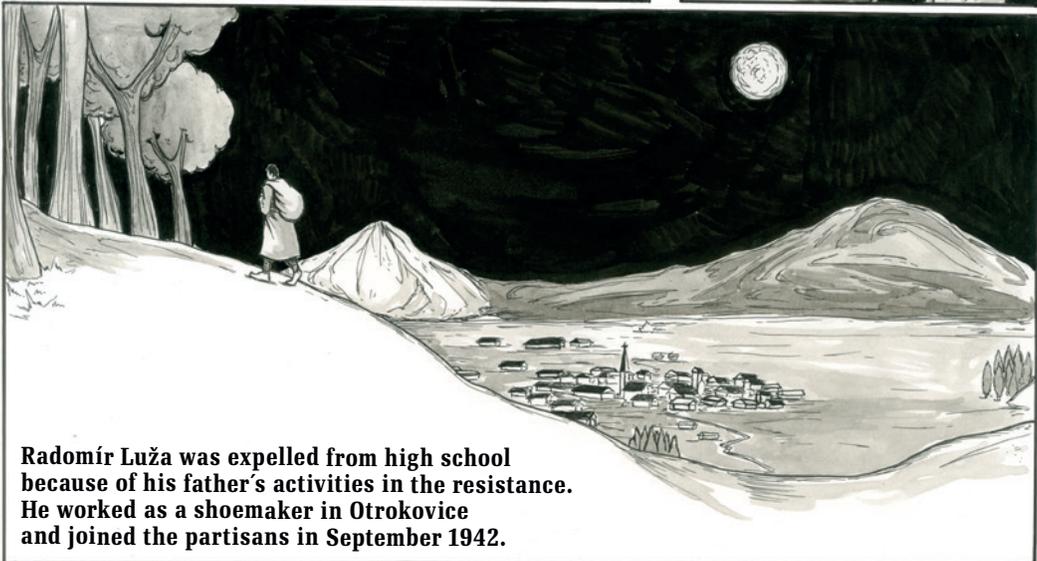
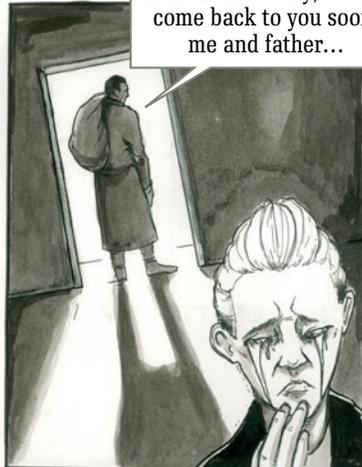
Interrogation of Vojtěch Luža's wife and son.



Be careful, my boy.

The Gestapo will never catch me or my father. They had us in custody for a month this time, but next time we would go directly to the concentration camp. I have to disappear.

I'm going to fight the Germans until we defeat them. Don't worry, we will come back to you soon, me and father...



Radomír Luža was expelled from high school because of his father's activities in the resistance. He worked as a shoemaker in Otrokovice and joined the partisans in September 1942.



Luža became Deputy Commander of a guerrilla troop with 400 Czechoslovak and Soviet fighters. They fought fierce battles with the German Army and SS in the Vysočina region.



Generál Vojtěch Luža, a member of the resistance group Council of Three...

...was killed on October 2, 1944, by Czech gendarmes in the pub in Hříště near the town of Přibyslav.



Avenging the general's death. Came quickly. Twelve partisans ambushed the Gendarmerie on October 26...

And executed five gendarmes, two of whom were responsible for the general's death. Luža Junior was their executioner.



This happens to those who betray our resistance. These people have murdered members of the resistance and they have deserved this just punishment.

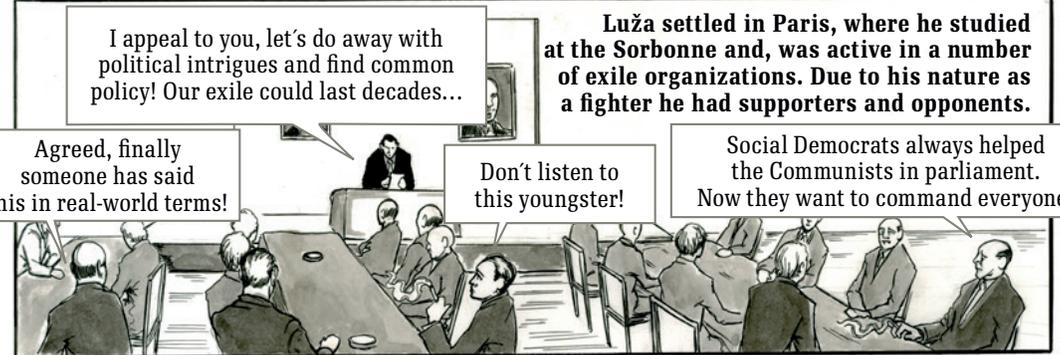
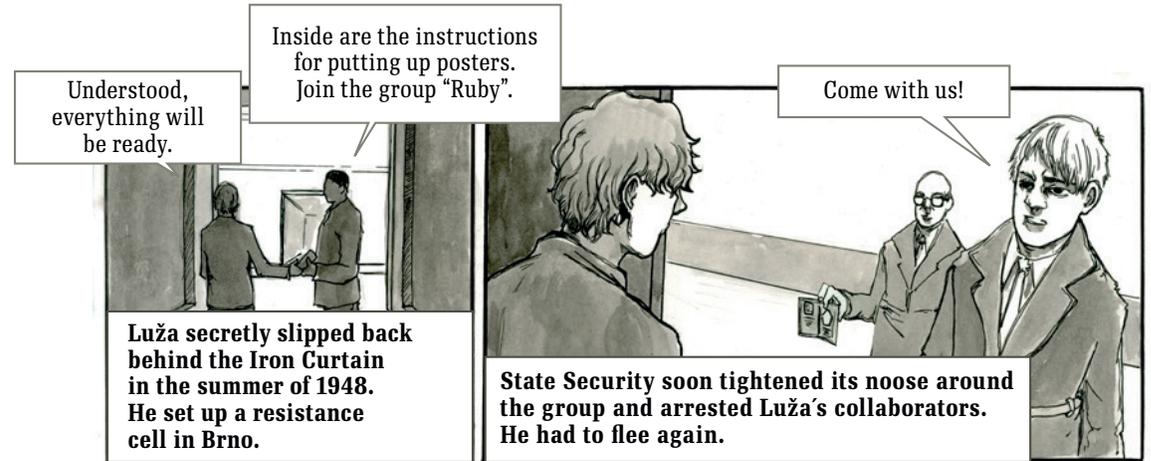
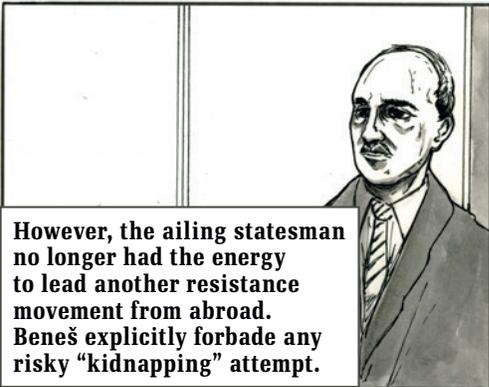
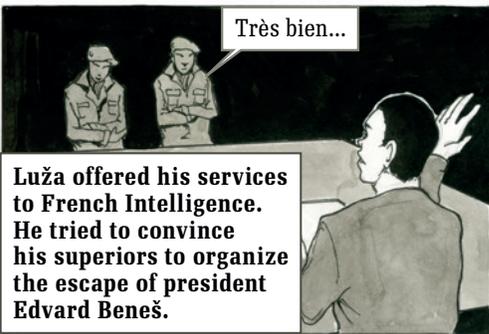


The war came to the end. Radomír Luža began to study at the law school in Brno, where he was active in the Youth Organization of the Social Democratic Party and an opponent of the Communists.

The Communists manipulated a governmental crisis and carried out a coup d'état on February 25, 1948. Bad times were to follow for Czechoslovak Democrats. Thousands escaped to the West.



Luža didn't hesitate too long and crossed the border illegally with his fiancée, Libuše, on March 29, 1948.

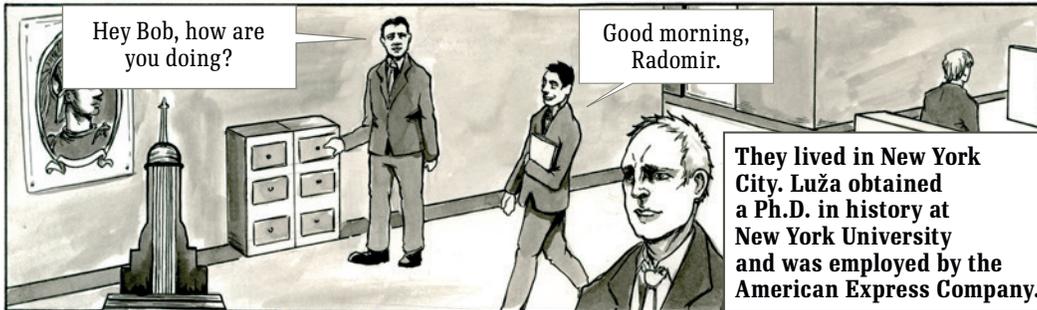




The vigorous young man with more war experience than many generals couldn't stand idly by. He often travelled to Switzerland, Italy and Austria, recruited new agents and informants, and successfully uncovered Communist spies.



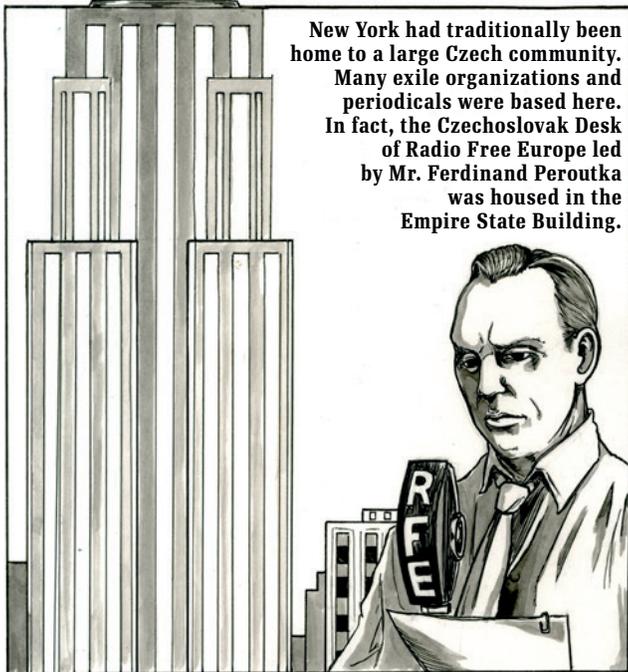
When the opportunity occurred, Radomír and Libuše moved to the USA in the fall of 1953.



Hey Bob, how are you doing?

Good morning, Radomír.

They lived in New York City. Luža obtained a Ph.D. in history at New York University and was employed by the American Express Company.



New York had traditionally been home to a large Czech community. Many exile organizations and periodicals were based here. In fact, the Czechoslovak Desk of Radio Free Europe led by Mr. Ferdinand Peroutka was housed in the Empire State Building.



Luža focused on the Testimony quarterly, which he began to publish in the fall of 1956 with journalist Pavel Tigrid. Four years later, Testimony moved to Paris and soon it became the most influential Czech exile press.

In 1960, Luža worked for an American Foundation providing stipends to students from developing countries. He returned to Europe, this time to Vienna.



In the Austrian capital, Luža family grew with the birth of a son, Radomír, and a daughter, Sabrina.



Luža also became involved with the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY), a branch of the Socialist International. It coordinated dozens of Non-Communist Youth Unions from all over the world.

He was Editor-in-chief of IUSY, released in many languages. He travelled and gave lectures and was instrumental in seeing that IUSY sharply defined itself against the Soviet bloc.



Authorities in Prague followed Luža's activities with extreme displeasure.



The Comrade Deputy Minister yelled at me on the phone for an hour. You need to do something about this damned Luža! He harms Czechoslovakia as much as he can!

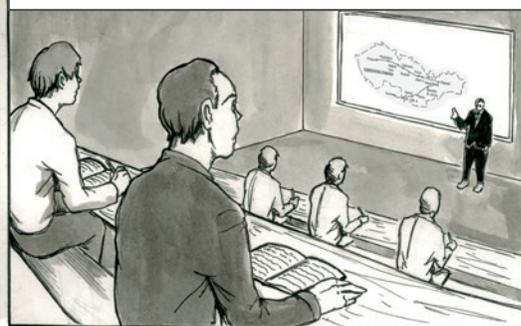
Launch the operation.



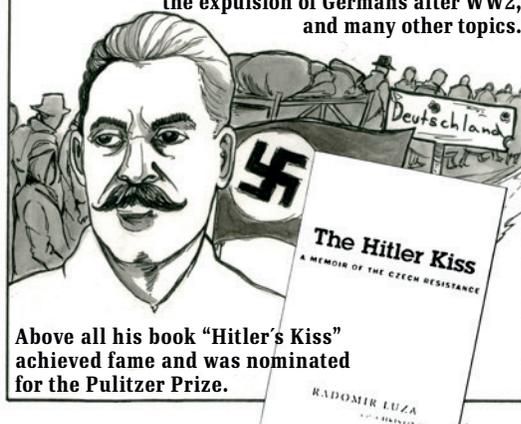
His car is coming. Finish it quickly! We need to get out of here!



In the late 1960s, the Luža family moved back to the USA, to Louisiana. Luža taught in the Department of History at Tulane University for almost thirty years.



He was a very prolific author, too. He wrote more than forty papers focused on Central Europe, the USSR, the expulsion of Germans after WW2, and many other topics.



Above all his book "Hitler's Kiss" achieved fame and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

Twenty-five StB agents were involved in operations against Luža in Vienna. They pursued him constantly, threatened his friends, tapped his phone. They even installed bugs directly in Luža's apartment.

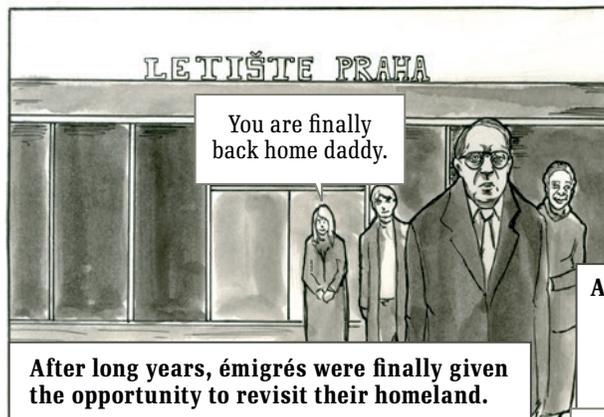
The Communist régime in Czechoslovakia collapsed in November 1989.



No more Communism!

We want free elections!

Economic transformation may bring serious risks.



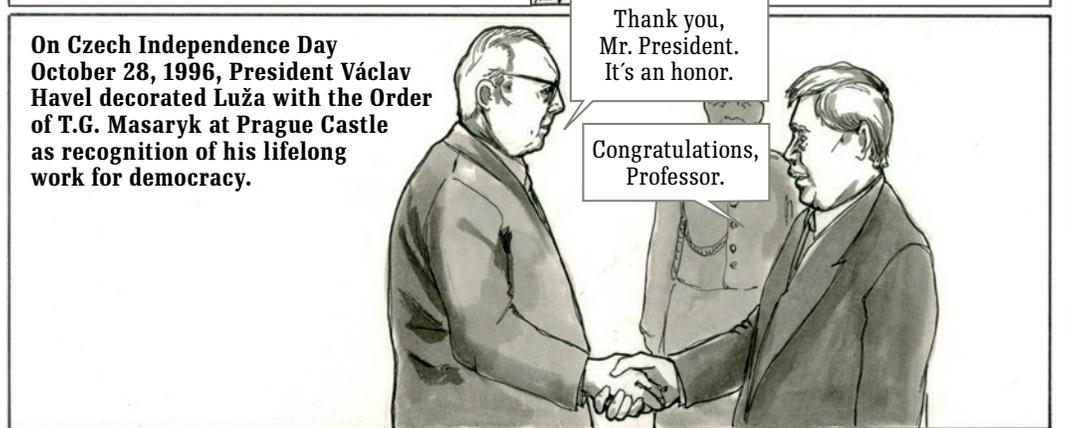
You are finally back home daddy.

After long years, émigrés were finally given the opportunity to revisit their homeland.



As usual, Luža was very busy. He helped to restore the Social Democratic Party, taught at Masaryk University, gave interviews. He was also more critical of developments in Czechoslovakia.

On Czech Independence Day October 28, 1996, President Václav Havel decorated Luža with the Order of T.G. Masaryk at Prague Castle as recognition of his lifelong work for democracy.



Thank you, Mr. President. It's an honor.

Congratulations, Professor.



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