RADOMÍR LUŽA
“STORIES OF OUR CZECHOSLOVAKS”

TOMÁŠ PÁNEK
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 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.
Yes, Papa. I want to be like you!

SO WHERE IS LUŽA?!

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

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!

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.

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.

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.
The war came to an 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 offered his services to French Intelligence. He tried to convince his superiors to organize the escape of president Edvard Beneš.

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

I have just returned from Prague Castle...

You will see, Luža! The working class will show you its anger one day!

The Communists secretly slipped back behind the Iron Curtain in the summer of 1948. He set up a resistance cell in Brno.

I need your help, Radomir.

Yes! We must hurry! We should be in Austria in a few minutes.

Agreed, finally someone has said this in real-world terms!

Très bien...

No! I can’t go anymore. We have to rest...

State Security soon tightened its noose around the group and arrested Luža’s collaborators. He had to flee again.

I appeal to you, let’s do away with political intrigues and find common policy! Our exile could last decades...

Come with us!

Long live Gottwald!

Inside are the instructions for putting up posters. Join the group “Ruby”.

Luža became a friend of the former ministers Hubert Ripka and Sergěj Ingr. He created Czechoslovak Exile Intelligence in France.

Don’t listen to this youngster!

Social Democrats always helped the Communists in parliament. Now they want to command everyone!

Its task was to infiltrate Communist Czechoslovakia and to gain strategic information.

However, the ailing statesman no longer had the energy to lead another resistance movement from abroad. Beneš explicitly forbade any risky “kidnapping” attempt.

I need your help.

I have just returned from Prague Castle...

Agreed, finally someone has said this in real-world terms!

Social Democrats always helped the Communists in parliament. Now they want to command everyone!

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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.

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

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 Tigrík. Four years later, Testimony moved to Paris and soon it became the most influential Czech exile press.

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.

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

Hey Bob, how are you doing?

Good morning, Radomír.

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.
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!

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.

Launch the operation.

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.

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