

Edvard Beneš: Scholar, Political Leader, Mason



by Walter Benesch

Beneš 20th Century Eastern European Social & Political Leader

- Born May 17, 1884

- * Small town in Bohemia

- * Most of youth in Prague

- Education

- * Undergrad Faculty of Philosophy Charles University, Prague

- * Doctorate of Law, Sorbonne, Paris



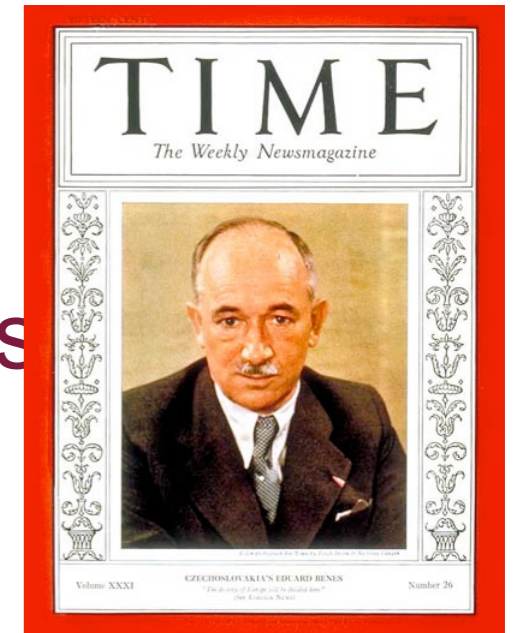
WWI & Aftermath

- Prague Academy of Commerce
 - * Lecturer in Sociology
 - * Became politically active
- WWI
 - * Leader in Czech pro-independence/anti-Austrian resistance
 - * 9/1915 exiled to Paris
 - * Visits to England, & USA (NYC & Chicago)
- Appeal to League of Nations successful



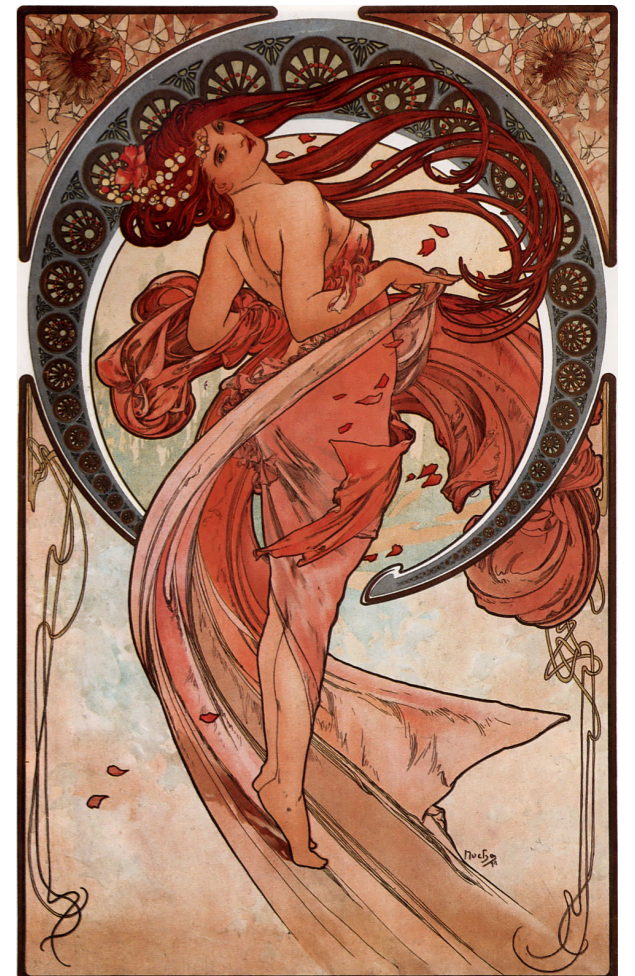
Czechoslovakia Formed

- Beneš appointed Foreign Minister
 - * Held through 10 successive governments
 - * Rep to Treaty of Versailles
 - * 23-27 member League of Nations council
 - ➔ Became internationally recognized leader
- Major aid to Tomas Masaryk
 - * Both taught sociology
 - * Both led independence movement



Masonry In Czechoslovakia

- Jan Amos Komensky (later Comenius Lodge) approved by Grand Orient of France
 - * Chartered delivered Sept. 28, 1919
 - ➔ By Rene Henry Besnard 33° French senator
 - ➔ Beginning of the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia
 - * Ill. Bro. Alphonse Mucha 33° famous artist, led formation of Scottish Rite



Beneš the Mason

- Joined Jan Amos Komensky Lodge #1

- * Re-Chartered in 1919

 - ➔ First formed in 1726

- Membership records destroyed in WWII

- * Played a major role in re-forming G... Lodge during & after Nazi occupation

 - ➔ In England during the War

 - ➔ Reformation in 1945



Presidency



- VP under Pres. Masaryk (1918-1935)
- Elected President upon Masaryk's retirement
- Opposed German claim to Sudetenland
 - * Betrayed by England 1938
 - * Sudetenland surrendered to Germany for "Peace in our time."
 - * German occupation of whole country followed
- Forced into exile to London
 - * Led Czech Government & Grand Lodge in

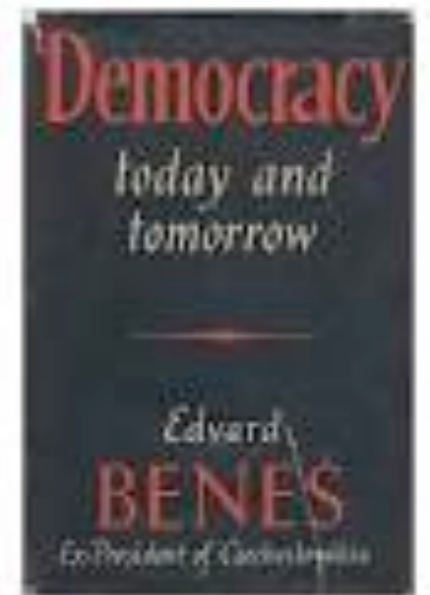


With wife 1934



Work Continued

- Visited brother during WWII
 - * At University of Chicago
 - ➔ Guest lecturer
 - ➔ Nazi assassination attempted - stopped by journalist
 - * Wrote Democracy Today & Tomorrow
 - ➔ Book led to suspicion by Communists
 - ➔ Would lead to wife's house arrest until her death
 - ➔ Collector item today



Coalition Government

- Pressure from Soviet Union
 - * Coalition government of 1947
 - * Communist party leader Klement Gottwald selected as Prime Minister
 - ➔ Demanded more Communists to be appointed
 - ➔ Packed police with members
 - * Non-communists resignations
 - ➔ Beneš refused resignations
 - ➔ Gottwald threatened with Red Army backing
 - ➔ Resignations accepted - death of free



Beneš death

- Edvard heartbroken
- Forced out of government
- Illness led to death, Sept. 3, 1948



* Funeral National event

- ➔ Protestant & Catholic Services
- ➔ Hundreds of thousands in attendance
- ➔ Popularity major threat to Communists



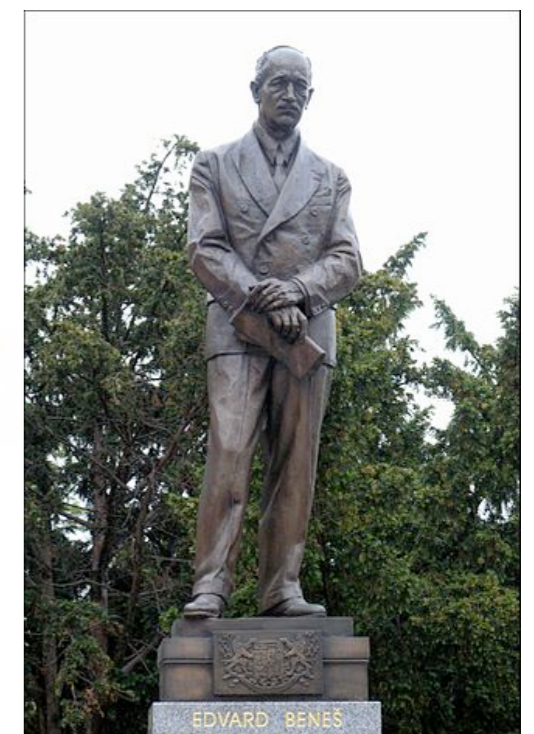
- Wife under house arrest in country home until 1974!

Edvard Beneš Remembered

- Where stayed in England
- Throughout the Czech Republic

- * Books & literature
- * Mostly in Philately

➔ Including a 2004 Commemoration Stamp



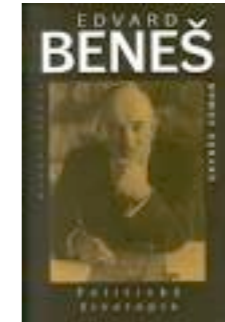
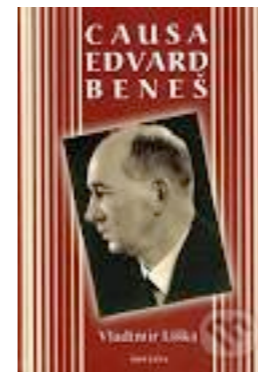
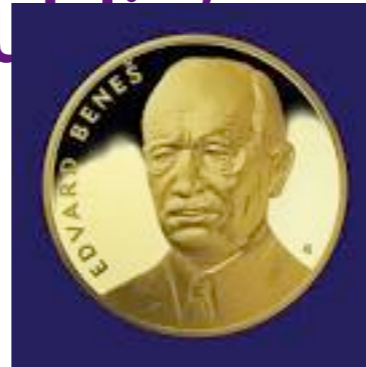
Re-examined today

- Considered a major contributor to Czech Republic

- * Morays

- * Culture

- * MASONRY



- As Philosopher & Inspirational leader

- * Sociology professor

- * Leader in International Law & Negotiations



- Considered an exceptional leader in the harshest of times