

**READING CIRCLE FORMAT**

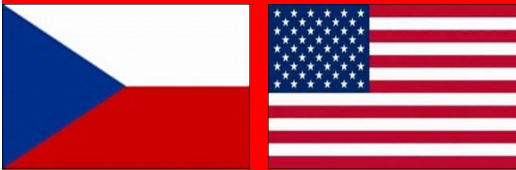
6:15 to 6:30 p.m. Social Time  
 6:30 p.m. Roll Call & Welcome  
 6:40 to 7:10 Book Review by Leader  
 7:10 to 7:30 p.m. Round Table Discussion

You do not need to have read the book to attend. Participants are also asked to contribute any relevant information about the book, topic or author.

*Join us for a good read!*

**Learn more about our rich Czech heritage.**

**Due to the pandemic, contact the names below for current meeting information! We'd love to have you!!!**



**CONTACTS...**

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 January 26	 February 23	 March 30
 April 27	 May 25	 June 29
 July 27	 August 31	 September 28
 October 26	 November 30	<p><b>NO DECEMBER CIRCLE MEETING!</b></p> <p><i>Happy New Year!</i></p> <p><i>Šťastný Nový rok!</i></p> December 28



**Nebraska Czechs of Lincoln 2021**

*The Czech/American Reading Circle*

*The snow did not fall this time, it simply spilled out of heaven like thousands of feather-beds being emptied." describing a winter snow fall on the Nebraska prairie from Willa Cather's book, My Antonia, 1918.*

The Czech/American Reading Circle, formed over 100 years later, as such a snow again began to fall over the Nebraska prairie, January 11, 2019.

The Czech/American Reading Circle shares significant books about, by, for, and important to, people of Czech heritage.



## Czech/ American Reading Circle

### Pravda vítězí Truth prevails

**MONTH:** January 26, 2021  
**TOPIC:** *The Last Palace*, 2018  
**AUTHOR:** Norman Eisen  
**LEADER:** Dr. Louis Relth  
**SUMMARY:**

A sweeping yet intimate narrative about the last hundred years of turbulent European history, as seen through one of Mitteleuropa's greatest houses—and the lives of its occupants. When Norman Eisen moved into the US ambassador's residence in Prague, returning to the land his mother had fled after the Holocaust, he was startled to discover swastikas hidden beneath the furniture in his new home. These symbols of Nazi Germany were remnants of the residence's forgotten history, and evidence that we never live far from the past.

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Last-Palace>

**MONTH:** February 23, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Love and Garbage*, 1986  
**AUTHOR:** Ivan Klíma  
**LEADER:** Dr. Lorraine Duggin  
**SUMMARY:**

From an internationally acclaimed Czech writer comes a shrewd, humane, and poignant novel, set in Prague before the Velvet Revolution, whose perceptions about love, conscience, and betrayal cut to the bone of life in both totalitarian and democratic societies. "A chilling story from the underground."--The New York Times. Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Love-Garbage-Ivan-Klima/dp/0679737553>

**MONTH:** March 30, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Franci's War: A Woman's Story of Survival*, 2020  
**AUTHOR:** Franci Rabinek Epstein  
**LEADER:** Dr. Hana Walserova  
**SUMMARY:**

The engrossing memoir of a spirited and glamorous young fashion designer who survived World War II, with an afterword by her daughter, Helen Epstein. In the summer of 1942, twenty-two year-old Franci Rabinek--designated a Jew by the Nazi racial laws--arrived at Terezin, a concentration camp and ghetto forty miles north of her home in Prague. It would be the beginning of her three-year journey from Terezin to the Czech family camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, to the slave labor camps in Hamburg, and Bergen Belsen. After liberation by the British in April 1945, she finally returned to Prague. ... Franci's War is the powerful testimony of one incredibly strong young woman who endured the horrors of the Holocaust and survived. Source: <https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/francis-war-a-womans-story-of-survival>



Truth prevails (Czech: Pravda vítězí, Slovak: Pravdivíťazí, Latin: Veritas vincit)  
is the national motto of the Czech Republic.

**MONTH:** April 27, 2021  
**BOOK:** *The Good Soldier Švejk*, 1921  
**AUTHOR:** Jaroslav Hašek  
**LEADER:** Tom Zumpfo & Cathleen Oszly  
**SUMMARY:**

Good-natured and garrulous, Švejk becomes the Austro-Hungarian army's most loyal Czech soldier when he is called up on the outbreak of the First World War - although his bumbling attempts to get to the front serve only to prevent him from reaching it. Playing cards, getting drunk and becoming a general nuisance, the resourceful Švejk uses all his natural cunning and genial subterfuge to deal with the doctors, police, clergy and officers who chivvy him towards battle. The story of a 'little man' caught in a vast bureaucratic machine, *The Good Soldier Švejk* combines dazzling wordplay and piercing satire to create a hilariously subversive depiction of the futility of war. Cecil Parrott's vibrant, unabridged and unbowdlerized translation is accompanied by an introduction discussing Hašek's turbulent life as an anarchist, communist and vagrant, and the Everyman character of Švejk. This edition also includes a guide to Czech names, maps and original illustrations by Josef Ladás. Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Good-Soldier-Svejk-Fortunes-Classics/>

**MONTH:** May 25, 2021  
**BOOK:** *I Served the King of England*, 1971  
**AUTHOR:** Bohumil Hrabal  
**LEADER:** Gwen Willems

**SUMMARY:**  
Czech history is satirized through this pseudo-memoir of Ditie, a waiter whose political ideology changes for the worse out of love for a Nazi gym teacher. "Hrabal's depiction of post-WW II Czechoslovakia is unrealistically rosy, and Ditie's moral transformation is not entirely persuasive. But the novel is always witty, often wise, and sparkles in Wilson's beautiful translation".  
Source: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-679-72786-6>

**MONTH:** June 29, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Čech v Americkém Kongresu*, 2020  
(*Czech In the American Congress*)

**AUTHOR:** Martin Nekola  
**LEADER:** Jan Kublšta

**SUMMARY:**  
Adolph Sabath, US Congressman (long-time dean of the House of Representatives from the Democratic Party) of Czech descent from Chicago, written in Czech by historian Martin Nekola from Prague.  
Published in: Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny [Lidové noviny Publisher] 2020, 183 p. Ego. ISBN 978-80-7422-755-4 (NLN) Not yet translated into English.

**MONTH:** July 27, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Under a Cruel Star*, 1986  
**AUTHOR:** Heda Margolius Kovály  
**LEADER:** Carter Hulinsky  
**SUMMARY:**

Heda Margolius Kovály (1919–2010) endured both the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz and the brutality of Czechoslovakia's postwar Stalinist government. Her husband, after surviving Dachau and Auschwitz and becoming Czechoslovakia's deputy minister of foreign trade, was convicted of conspiracy in the infamous 1952 Slansky trial and then executed. Her clear-eyed memoir of her life during those horrific days is resonant with lyricism, managing somehow to be heartening even as it helps us to understand the political tragedies of the twentieth century. Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Under-Cruel-Star-Prague-1941-1968/>

**MONTH:** August 31, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Essays In Czech History*, 1969  
**AUTHOR:** R. R. Betts  
**LEADER:** Dr. Lorraine Duggin  
**SUMMARY:**

The late Professor Betts held the Masaryk Chair of Central European History at the University of London. These are his essays and lectures. The bulk of the volume is devoted to the life and times of Jan Hus and to the development of Hussite Movement. There are also studies of Jerome of Prague and of relationship between English religious life and thought in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and Hussitism. The work closes with a study of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's philosophy of history. Source: (Paraphrased from the book cover).  
<https://www.amazon.com/Essays-Czech-History-R-R-Betts/dp/0485110954>: University of London, The Athlone Press, London, 1969. xv+ 315 pages  
Review: The Slavonic and East European Review Vol. 48, No. 112 (Jul., 1970), pp. 429-431 (3 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4206245?seq=1>

**MONTH:** September 28, 2021  
**BOOK:** *The Čechs (Bohemians) In America: A Study of Their National, Cultural, Economic and Religious Life* . 1920  
**AUTHOR:** Tomáš Čapek  
**LEADER:** Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce  
**SUMMARY:**

I do not describe Cech America as a tourist who passes hurriedly through a foreign country and records the impressions Of the moment; I write as a close relative, a member of the family, who for thirty-nine years has lived uninterruptedly in Cech America or very close to its border. I know it in its holiday attire and in its working clothes. I know its faults, which are many, and its virtues, which, I like to think, outweigh them. A residence of seven years in Omaha, spent partly in a newspaper office, partly in a law office, gave me a rare opportunity to observe at close range the evolution of the virile settler of the Middle West, while life in large cities (in New York since 1894) has brought me in direct and daily contact with the men and women who live in those queer but cozy corners of America called, somewhat patronizingly, foreign quarters. Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Cechs-Bohemians-America-Political-Religious/dp/0656124539>  
Online Book at: <https://archive.org/details/cechsbohemiansin0capeuoft> or <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000335479>

**MONTH:** October 26, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Czech Contributions to the Progress of Nebraska*, 1976  
**AUTHOR:** Vladimír Kučera & Alfred Novacek (ONLINE)  
**LEADER:** Layne Pierce  
**SUMMARY:**

Published in 1976 this book coedited by Vladimír Kučera and Alfred Novacek, is a compilation of articles and statements about the history and cultural development of the Czech settlers who came to Nebraska. This book is fundamental for anyone who is of Nebraska Czech origin or interest. Review: by Layne Pierce  
Online Book at: [https://www.unl.edu/czechheritage/Vladimir\\_kucera.shtml](https://www.unl.edu/czechheritage/Vladimir_kucera.shtml)

**MONTH:** November 30, 2021  
**BOOK:** *Tales of the Czechs*, 1983  
**AUTHOR:** Kathy and Joe Vosoba  
**LEADER:** Susan Nagle  
**SUMMARY:**

Tales of the Czechs: *Tales of the Czechs: History and Legends As Told At the Pageant of the Czech People Wilber Czech Festival Wilber, Nebraska 1962 Through 1982*. Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Tales-Czechs-History-Festival-Nebraska>

**MONTH:** December 28, 2020 **NO CIRCLE MEETING**

## Vítáme Vás!

Happy New Year!  
Šťastný Nový rok!