JULIUS FUČÍK

BY GUSTA FUČÍKOVÁ

When Julius Fučík was executed in Hliněná Christmas in 1935, he and many others thought that they were condemning his work and their country to eternal oblivion. But since that time his name and work have become the heritage of millions of people who are fighting for justice and their country's freedom. Today, in 1955, it is known throughout the world.

Fučík was born in the suburbs of Smíchov, Prague, on February 10, 1897. His father, Václav, was a metalworker who worked in the Totem factory, and his mother, Františka, was a seamstress. At the age of seventeen, Karol used to sing in the "Ceský" and "Debrovský" clubs, later making guest appearances at the "Světla" and "Arsena" theatres in Stavovský, where he became a member of the cast. He continued in this capacity until 1914, when he was drafted into the army at the same time.

Marie Fučíková, Julius's mother, was a nurse.
When **JULIUS FUČÍK** was executed in Hitler Germany in 1943, his executioners thought that they were condemning his work and name to eternal oblivion. But since that time his name and work have become the heritage of millions of working people who are building a free life in peace, and of millions of people who are fighting for peace and their country's freedom. Today his name is known throughout the world.

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Fučík was born in the working-class suburb of Smíchov, Prague, on February 23rd, 1903. His father, Karel, was a metal worker who operated a lathe in Baron Ringhoffer's factory, and was very fond of singing. At the age of seventeen, Karel used to sing in the "Havlíček" and "Dobrovský" clubs, later making guest appearances at the "Švanda" and "Arena" theatres in Smíchov, where he became a member of the cast. He continued in this capacity until 1912 while working in the Ringhoffer factory at the same time.

Marie Fučíková, Julius Fučík's mother, was a seamstress.
The boy spent his early days in her company and gave her the tender love of a devoted son. He inherited his father's humour and love of life, his mother's balance and sensitivity; and they both passed on to him a love of singing and music. The whole family had musical talent. Fučík's uncle, also Julius Fučík, was a popular composer, loved by the Czechoslovak people to this day and known throughout the world.

Julius was two and a half years old when he appeared on a Smíchov stage in the fairy tale, The Glass Slipper or Princess Cinderella. With his younger sisters Libuše and Věra he played children's roles in Smíchov theatres and later in Plzeň. When he was nine years old he acted before Czech audiences in Berlin.

As a child Julius already had an extraordinary interest in books. His mother taught him to read even before he started school. He enjoyed school and did well at his studies. But he also made friends with the children of workers and played the usual games with them in Smíchov streets.

In 1913 the mother and children moved to Plzeň, where for a year Karel had been a member of the cast of the municipal theatre. Little Julius went from the working-class surroundings of Smíchov to the Plzeň of the Škoda Works. When the family rented a flat they took in a boarder to help them pay the rent.

Julius entered the "reálka"* in the autumn of 1914. From the second year of the war his father worked as a soldier in the Škoda Works and remained there until 1919, in the ordnance department. Julius used to carry his father's lunches.

* "Reálka" — a type of secondary school in which neither Latin nor Greek was taught.
to him on night shift. He came to know the workers and to understand working-class solidarity. As the war went on, year after year, the misery of the working people increased, the queues for maize bread and for flour grew longer. Julius stood in these queues for hours during the afternoon and evening and into the night to bring home a piece of yellow maize bread. He heard the women lamenting over lost husbands and sons, he saw their prematurely old faces, the anxiety in their eyes as they worried about what to give their children to eat. He heard them curse war. At the age of twelve he edited a magazine, written in a school notebook. It was called SLOVAN (Slav) and there appeared in it official communiqués from Vienna, news from abroad, commentaries on social conditions, news items concerning the introduction of bread tickets and flour made of straw. The magazine carried short essays, a cultural page, theatre reviews and sports news.

In 1916 he “published” another magazine, VESELA MYSLE (Gay Thoughts), on octavo sheets of paper. He sat patiently in a narrow, dark little kitchen and in a childish hand wrote sketches, poems, charades and riddles. In the hard years of war when hunger and want stalked the land, reaching into the Fučík family too, the young boy wrote a magazine of humour. Here one sees his fundamental characteristics: he never yielded to despair and always overcame obstacles. Though the oppressive war atmosphere weighed heavily on adults and children alike, Julius did not give in. He wanted his magazine to cheer his mother and father and the neighbours in the house, “to make them forget the hard times of the present.” When he was fourteen he produced ČECH (The Czech), another hand-written magazine. This was in the nature of a
literary review. Its contents show how broad and yet profound were the interests of young Fučík. His fine hand-written copy of *Tyrol Elegies* has been preserved from this period. It is an anti-Austrian poem by the great Czech patriot, poet and satirist of the 19th century, Karel Havlíček Borovský. Even then the young Fučík was filled with noble ideals of national liberation; he hated the old monarchy.

The revolutionary events of 1917 in Russia had great repercussions in the working class and among progressive people throughout the world. The revolutionary ideas of the Škoda workers in Plzeň found expression in frequent strikes of workers who were fighting against war and exploitation. Their opposition to Austria grew even stronger after a great explosion in the Bolevec gunpowder factory near Plzeň on May 22nd, 1917, in which about 400 women workers perished. Troops were sent to Plzeň. All this had a profound effect on the impressionable, thoughtful fourteen-year-old Julius. In the Škoda Works there were Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Croatians, Germans, and they all pulled together during strikes. Julius was stirred by the spirit of international solidarity which they showed. On May 1st, 1918, after the October Revolution in Russia, Prague workers celebrated the last May Day of the war with a great demonstration held under the watchword: "A Socialist Nation". A former fellow-student recalls that Julius, now fifteen, thought it his duty to join the Plzeň workers in their May Day demonstration. Standing in front of his school building he persuaded his classmates to go with him to the square and demonstrate with the workers. The majority of the boys in the fourth form went with him.
On June 21st, Julius saw five children murdered in Plzeň. Soldiers began loading bread into a truck on Koterov Street. Children gathered around the truck and called out: “We’re hungry!” Some of them, it appears, tried to take loaves of barracks bread from the truck. Orders came for a military detachment to restore order. At the officer’s command the soldiers fired a volley at the children. Five children lay dead in the road, on the pavement, or by the houses where they had tried to take shelter from the bullets.

The Škoda workers were greatly excited by these events and, inspired by the Great October Socialist Revolution, declared a general strike. All these occurrences had their effect on Julius, as is shown by the verses he jotted down on August 5th, 1918.

**Up Above**

“Why roar the rabble so below?”
“They say that hunger rules the land.”
“Well, our cure for that is prison
Or else the hangman’s hand.”

**Voices From Below**

“Perhaps you gentlemen are right,
’Tis true we want our laughter, too.
And then we’ll have it, do believe,
When the hangman has hanged you.”

In these lines one can already hear the voice of a fighter against injustice and against the bosses. Julius Fučík stood at the side of the working class, at the side of those who
suffered from hunger, and he remained faithful to the workers throughout his life. What he had experienced and seen made him realize that all was not right with the world, that it had to be changed. And he exerted all his efforts to help bring about the change. He helped to found the Worker-Student Committee in Plzeň and continued to work in it. He tried to obtain information about the revolutionary events in Russia. News about the significance of the Great October Revolution in 1917 was distorted in Austria-Hungary and later in Czechoslovakia. Tirelessly Fučík sought the real truth.

He was young and credulous when the Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed on October 28th, 1918. He thought that liberty had come for all. Years later — in 1933 — he recalled this day.

"It is evening. There is a meeting of the Worker-Student Committee. As they discuss the situation they quote verses by Viktor Dyk and Svatopluk Čech, and passages from the Communist Manifesto. All the voices sound excited. It is almost midnight. A worker, a Social Democrat, lives opposite. I wake him. He dresses quickly. He wants to know more details. Freedom? Yes? Independence? Yes? And who announced it? Who is at the head? I think that doesn’t matter. I’m offended by his lack of confidence in the people who have done such great things. He explains to me excitedly and militantly that it is important nevertheless, that this tells us for whom the new freedom is intended. I don’t understand. Why worry! Of course it is for us, for everyone. Who else? He looks at me with strange eyes and shrugs his shoulders. How could I forget the man who saw all that at midnight on October 28th, 1918!"

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was connected in
Fučík’s mind with the oppression of the Czech people, with the shooting down of workers, with injustice and social inequality “above” and “below”, with cultural reaction and censorship. The new State should do away with these crimes. Therefore, when the Government deceived the people, when the right-wing Socialists betrayed the idea of Socialism, Julius Fučík, so closely linked with the working class by the sentiments and experiences of his youth, put all his hopes and faith into the fight for revolutionary ideas and joined the Communist movement. His love of country, his love for the working class and for truth and justice he found expressed in these great ideals and in the struggle for them. He was strengthened in his convictions after the Soviet Union opened up before him the perspectives of a new world and when he later saw the Soviet Union for himself.

He had been a zealous reader from early childhood. He had read hundreds of books. His reading matter in the years 1919 to 1922 shows us the trend of his thinking, it shows what made up his world of ideas. In addition to the world classics: Balzac, Baudelaire, Belinsky, Burns, Byron, Carducci, Corneille, Dostoievsky, Flaubert, France, Goethe, Gogol, Gorky, Heine, Ibsen, Jaurès, Korolenko, Lenin, Lermontov, Marx, Molière, Pushkin, Rolland, Shaw, Shakespeare, Shelley, Schiller, Sophocles, Tolstoi, Turgeniev, Voltaire, Wilde, Zola and others, he read the Czech authors, Alois Jirásek, Božena Němcová, Jan Neruda, Antonín Sova, Jiří Wolker and a great number of writings on Czech literary history and criticism. All these books he listed carefully in special notebooks, most of them with excerpts and critical comments. He also made notes of his impressions of con-
certs where Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Liszt, Chopin, Smetana and Dvořák were played.

As a pupil of the sixth form of the "reálka" in 1920, Julius joined the staff of the Pravda co-operative publishers in Plzeň, who published the magazine PRAVDA, organ of the left-wing Social Democrats. When the Social Democratic left wing founded the Communist Party in 1921, he joined this party at the age of eighteen.

In the autumn of 1921, Julius Fučík went to Prague to study at the University. He was without funds, however, having arrived in Prague with only 2.40 crowns in his pocket. Looking for work to support himself as he studied, he got a job as office boy in the State Statistical Office. At the same time he registered at the Philosophical Faculty. He attended lectures by Professors Nejedlý, Šalda and Tille on Czech literature, comparative history of Slavonic literatures, history of French literature and history of music. At the same time he was writing articles for PRAVDA, Communist Party organ in the Plzeň region. It was also in this paper that he published his first extensive critical study of the Czech poet Jiří Wolker (1900–24) — a literary figure to whom he later turned his attention several times.

Fučík says of this period:

"I grew up in time of war. For young people this was of special significance. A person twelve years old at the beginning of the war saw events at its end with the eyes of one who was still a child, but who had had the experience of a twenty-five-year-old. Therefore I had to see that not all was right in a world where people killed each other against their will and full of yearning for life. I began,
as it were, to criticize it. And books and the theatre were a large part of the world for me. I searched in them and realized that there are books which speak the truth, others which lie and still others which are completely mute. I thought it was necessary to say that there should be no lying or mute books. This I considered my sphere of endeavour for a better world. Therefore I began to write about books and about the theatre."

He continued to read a great deal and zealously studied Marxist literature, in so far as it was available in this country. He took part in the life of the students’ Philosophical Union, the leadership of which was at that time in the hands of progressive students, and in which he also held office for a time. In 1923 he worked as a labourer, after having been deprived of his employment in the State Statistical Office for agitating for a strike of solidarity with building workers. He was a hod-carrier on a construction project and a day labourer in road building. In 1923 he also began to write theatre reviews for the progressive magazine SOCIALISTA and for the Plzeň journal PRAMEN.

In 1925 AVANTGARDA, a revolutionary magazine for students and workers, began to appear, edited and directed by Jan Šverma, Ivan Sekanina and Julius Fučík. Besides writing for the magazine and editing it, Fučík and Sekanina also sold it in the Student Home. When a new number appeared he would stand on the steps by the entrance to the Student Home with a pile of AVANTGARDA in his left hand and no student could pass without being offered the magazine.

Fučík began to write theatre reviews for the Communist Party’s central organ, RUDÉ PRÁVO, in 1925. In 1927–9 he gained material security as editor of K MEN, a publishers’
journal. But he left this magazine as soon as he realized that he would have to compromise his Socialist principles if he remained.

In November 1928, a month before elections, the Government banned all Communist papers to prevent that party from speaking to the workers. Julius Fučík, who had been co-editor with F. X. Šalda of TVORBA, a magazine of literary criticism, found a partial way out. Fučík went to Šalda, asking him to put this magazine at the disposal of the Communist Party. Šalda gave it to Fučík with these words: “Devil take them, you mustn’t be silent!” The first issue of the new TVORBA, a weekly for literature, politics and art, appeared on November 4th, 1928. Fučík became editor and later owner and publisher. He began at the same time to work on the staff of RUDÉ PRÁVO and RUDÝ VEČERNÍK, devoting all his splendid talents to the revolutionary cause.

He had been developing as a revolutionary journalist from the age of eighteen. At first he wrote about the theatre, then on literature, and finally became a political journalist and reporter. His political work did not affect in the least his close interest in cultural questions, in the theatre and literature. Throughout his whole life Fučík advocated the inseparability of culture and politics, and in his discussions with leading cultural figures he won many over to the Communist Party’s policy.

In 1929 economic crisis broke out in capitalist countries, affecting Czechoslovakia as well. Unemployment increased, the poverty of the workers grew greater. In autumn of the same year a miners’ strike was called in Northern Bohemia. Julius Fučík went to the North as a correspondent for RUDÉ
Julius Fučík's parents.
Ten-year-old Julius Fučík with his sister Libuše.
Fučík with his wife Gusta.
boj na severu
julius fučík

obsah

1 kč


Konfiskováno.

Přináší se, že i já, odjiždějme na sever, podobně jako těto hodná. Náhoda, souvislost, vytvořené touto potlačovací organizací, nemohly zastavit bezvírovou, ale první hodinou v Lomu, nově vzniklém centru severočeského revolučního, ukázala

Tvorba, magazine edited by J. Fučík. Page one carries a report on the strikes in North Bohemia.
Illegal paper Stávka (The Strike) and German edition, Der Streik, edited by Fučík.

During the strike at Most in 1932.
Arrival in Soviet Central Asia in 1930.

Interview with Julius Fučík in Alma Ata, Central Asia.
Honorary cavalryman of the Kirghiz National Division in Central Asia in 1930.

Talking things over with employees of a Stalinabad Hospital.
In Prague, 1936.
Fučík while working in the underground movement during the nazi occupation.
Pankrác prison in Prague where Julius Fučík was imprisoned.
Cell No. 267.
International Peace Prize awarded Julius Fučík at the Warsaw Congress of Partisans of Peace as the highest prize of honour, and one which will not be awarded again.
Drawing of J. Fučík by National Artist, Max Švabinský.
Fučík's name is given to Czechoslovak mines, factories, schools, sanatoria and ships.
Julius Fučík School in Náchod.
Julius Fučík is known and loved by progressive people throughout the world. A Fučík evening in New Delhi.
Fucík's most ardent desire was realized in 1930. He left with four worker delegates for the Soviet Union. Not one of the delegates received a passport, for the Government tried in every way to prevent workers from going from Czechoslovakia to the U. S. S. R., and from telling the Czechoslovak workers the truth about the Soviet Union after their return. Fucík crossed the border secretly along with the other delegates. After a long trip through Germany he finally got on a boat to Leningrad, where he first touched on Soviet soil. He remained four months in the Soviet Union, travelling thousands of kilometres from Leningrad through Moscow, the Ukraine, Stalingrad, to Central Asia, to Frunze, and to the Chinese border. Fucík was enthusiastic about the Soviet land and the Soviet people. In the Soviet Union he saw realized the dreams of the giants of mankind, dreams of a free man, living without exploiters, without crises, without unemployment, without hunger. He wrote of that trip:
"I have never felt so free... It is wonderful here and what I see in the Soviet Union is more than I had dared to suppose was true. Give everyone my regards and tell them it is worth it to fight for the strength that is here."

Julius Fučík returned to his country, full of the invincible strength of Soviet life, of Soviet people completing the first Five-Year Plan. He glowed with enthusiasm. He talked with workers, spoke at meetings, wrote about his experiences in RUDĚ PRÁVO, in RUDÝ VEČERNÍK, in TVORBA, worked on a book about the Soviet Union called In the Land Where Tomorrow Is Already Yesterday. At one of the meetings he was arrested and imprisoned for having travelled to the U. S. S. R. without a passport. The Soviet Union was being slandered in every possible way and the Government newspapers suppressed every truthful word about life in the U. S. S. R. In Mladá Boleslav, Fučík was sentenced to 14 days in prison because he had said at a meeting that, when the Czechoslovak delegation arrived in the Soviet Union, a Soviet Young Pioneer met them with the words: "We have read that they shoot children in your country. That doesn’t happen here." In April of the same year, the gendarmes had fired on children who were marching at the head of a workers’ parade near Radotín.

In 1930 Fučík was drafted for military service, but he was back in a month, a Communist journalist not being wanted in the army. For a time Fučík was sent on indefinite leave. As soon as he returned, he continued to hold meetings and write about the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1931 he again conducted a large delegation of working-class youth in secret across the Czechoslovak frontier on their way to the
U. S. S. R., remaining himself in Berlin. On the return trip from Berlin he was arrested and taken to Pankrác prison.

In the spring of 1932, a big strike of North Bohemian miners broke out. Again Fučík went to the North which had become so close to his heart. He often travelled there, writing reports about the miners' struggle and inspiring progressive writers to take their stand at the miners' side.

He was again called up for military service to Trenčín in the autumn of 1932. As a Communist he was not allowed to go through officers' training and was transferred from one unit to another to reduce the great influence he always had among soldiers. He wrote: "I am forbidden to meet several soldiers at one time, forbidden to talk with any comrades whatever in civilian clothes, forbidden to go to places where comrades go, forbidden to say that in civilian life I was editor of RUDÉ PRAVO or to mention anything connected with my profession."

But he could not be silenced. In January 1933, TVORBA published his short story, Rézinka and the Jovial Bailiff, in which he described exploitation and poverty in a Slovak village.

In 1933, after his release from the army, he was arrested right at the barracks, taken to police headquarters and remanded to the criminal court in Pankrác. By an ingenious use of legal loopholes he again escaped punishment. He was acquitted and became editor-in-chief of a new cultural-political daily, HALÓ NOVINY, which the Communist Party began to publish when RUDÉ PRAVO and RUDÝ VEČERNÍK were more and more often censored and banned. At this time he had to live under cover. He signed his articles with various pseudonyms. He stayed in hiding until August, 1934,
when he left for the Soviet Union as RUDÉ PRÁVO correspondent.

He spent nearly two years in the Soviet Union. Again he travelled over thousands of kilometres in the land of the Soviets, again he returned to his “own Central Asia”. His articles written for periodicals at that time were collected and published in 1949 under the title In the Beloved Land. Fučík continued the reports begun during his first stay in the U. S. S. R., when Dnieprostroy, Traktorstroy, Magnitostroï, the huge construction projects of the first Five-Year Plan, were going up. Fučík’s theme now was the completion of the construction projects of Socialism and, more particularly, the growth of Soviet Man.

"Man. In the name of Man, for Man, the industrial giants were built. Now Man is becoming a giant, a giant problem in all the building of Socialism. The plough of heroism of the First Five-Year Plan has turned the furrows in 160 million souls which had lain fallow during centuries of backwardness. And now the first planting is bursting through. Man, whose relation to human society is becoming clear. ‘See, how we are growing!’ they said four years ago and showed us new factories. ‘See how are growing’, they say now and show us the Man from the factory."

Fučík returned from the Soviet Union in the summer of 1936. Again he worked on the staff of RUDÉ PRÁVO. Since the warrant was still out for his arrest he again lived in semi-legality. When the Civil War broke out in Spain, Fučík was one of the most ardent supporters of the Spanish people against the fascist dictator Franco. He pointed to the great example of the Soviet Union where Socialism was coming into effect with the culmination of the second Five-Year
Plan and the promulgation of the Stalin Constitution. He fought for the creation of a united front of all honest and progressive people against the growing danger of fascism and war. He worked under the direct guidance of Klement Gottwald, who devoted great care and attention to RUDĚ PRÁVO. Fighters for the freedom of our people grew up on the staff of RUDĚ PRÁVO, together with Julius Fučík, fine and courageous people like Eduard Urx, František Krížek, Václav Křen, Jan Krejčí and a number of other journalists who all laid down their lives in the struggle against Hitler fascism.

Fučík returned to the editorship of TVORBA in 1938. In his articles he showed that the Czechoslovak Republic was directly threatened by Hitler fascism and by the traitors at home. The Communist Party mobilized the people to defend the independence of the country. In the summer of 1938 Fučík wrote a pamphlet, Will the Red Army Come to Help? It helped to strengthen the faith and love of the people for the Soviet Army.

In September 1938, however, the Government accepted the Berchtesgaden diktat ordering the surrender of the Sudeten territory, as had been agreed by Hitler and Chamberlain. The Communist Party mobilized the people throughout the Czechoslovak Republic to take part in demonstrations. The Government resigned. Fučík spoke on September 21st at 9:00 in the evening in front of the George of Podbrady barracks in Prague. He addressed a crowd of 10,000 to 15,000 people, saying that they were all fighters for freedom, whether in uniform or in civilian clothes. Mobilization was ordered on September 24th. Fučík immediately left the staff
of **RUDE PRÁVO** and enlisted, taking with him to the army the militant verses of Czech poets. The treachery of the new Government and the defeatist negotiations of President Beneš were not yet known. The people did not yet suspect that the mobilization was a huge fraud, intended to confuse them and weaken their vigilance. On September 30th, the *diktat* of Munich caught the people off their guard.

After the traitor government had capitulated, **RUDE PRÁVO** and all other Communist papers were banned. The Communist Party, too, was banned, but it worked on. Some party members were assigned to work abroad, some began work in the underground, some were charged with carrying on the fight with their pens in the workers’ and progressive papers which were still being published. Among this group was Fučík.

What did he write about? He returned to Czech history and made it a lesson and a source of strength for the present and showed the clear perspectives for the future.

"*In the depths of our people their strength was always invincible: whether it was strength of arms in the Hussite period or strength of militant ideas in the period after the Battle of the White Mountain. There were always men who grew up from healthy roots, with the primary mission and desire of proclaiming the truth: they did this without regard for personal detriment or injury visited on them by those who were causing torment to the people and who had for a time, in one way or another, taken power from the Czech people.*"

Fučík fought against defeatism and faint-heartedness, and brought out the great example of the revolutionary Hussite tradition, citing the Czech poet Jan Neruda:

"*Therefore Neruda thought that it was not a retreat from the*
tradition of Hussite struggles for human liberty, that is to say for the freedom of all people, but instead a perseverance along this line which would mean a guarantee of the future liberty and glory of the Czech people. Not accommodating oneself to the new-era enslavers but a struggle against them in the name of liberty for all humanity will bring freedom to the Czech people, too; Neruda was convinced of this and advised that we should proceed along this course — onward and yet onward.”

Fučík wrote about the period after the Battle of the White Mountain, about respect for the people, about progressive traditions, about the nature of the new Czech culture and about distinguished figures in Czech literature. He had to write under another name, however, because the censors knew the name of Julius Fučík too well.

On March 15, 1939, the Munich betrayal ended in the Nazi occupation of the country. On the very next day, Fučík began to write a novel, *The Generation That Came Before Peter*, where we find in the preface these prophetic words: “We are seeds sown below ground, Peter. That is our generation. That is what we call ourselves. Not all will germinate, not all will grow out of the ground when spring comes. Any one of the hobnailed boots which march above my head could stamp us out. It could crush us — by chance or from malice, or for the pleasure of destruction — we know this. And we live with this knowledge.

“But don’t think that we are afraid of this, Peter. Not all of us will grow up, nor will all of us perish. And we know this and live with this knowledge. The rustling of the mature clusters will cover the trampled graves they will be forgotten, everything will be forgotten, the anxiety and the grief — only the harvest will tell your generation for us, the living and the dead: Take and eat, for this is my body.”
When all the papers for which Fučík wrote had been banned, and when he had turned down the offer to write a cultural column for a fascist paper, he left Prague and went for a time to the small village of Chotiměř. There he studied the literature of the Czech renascence era. It was during this period that he conceived a plan for a book which he intended as a contribution to the re-evaluation of the history of Czech literature. This intention later crystallized in the form of a plan for a work entitled *The Silenced and the Forgotten*. In Chotiměř he wrote one of his finest studies in literary history, *Božena Němcová, the Militant*. He worked out a plan for publishing a National Library of the classics of the Czech renascence period.

In June 1940, the Gestapo looked for Julius Fučík in Plzeň, at his parents’ home. He was warned in time, however, and went to Prague. Although he remained in hiding, he visited the museum library very often, and gathered material about Jan Ohéral, who first translated Božena Němcová’s *Grandmother* into German and whose Socialist ideas interested him. About a month later he returned to Chotiměř and wrote notes on the translation of Sabina’s *Beginnings of the Theatre in Bohemia*.

A Czech gendarme was sent to arrest Fučík on Gestapo orders. In a long discussion Fučík convinced him that a Czech should not arrest another Czech for the Gestapo, and thus escaped arrest. Again in Prague he lived in hiding with the common people — workers and teachers — patriots who concealed him in their homes at the risk of death. He got in touch with two members of the first underground Central Committee of the Communist Party, Eduard Urx and Otta
Synek. In the name of the Czech intelligentsia he wrote an Open Letter to the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Goebbels, which was published in an illegal leaflet.

"...But if you think, you worthless slanderer, that we, the Czech intellectuals, have less pride and less character than the Czech people from whom we sprang, if you think that we shall allow ourselves to be tempted or intimidated into alienating ourselves from the people and going along with the Gestapo against the people — then hear our reply again: No, no, never!"

Julius Fučík also wrote under a pseudonym for the children's magazine ROJ, which was edited by the progressive teacher L. Hanus, later tortured to death in Mauthausen. He wrote about Czech authors, and aroused children's love for Czech culture, for the Czech language and nation.

When the first underground Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was arrested in the spring of 1941, Fučík helped to organize a second Central Committee whose members were Julius Fučík, Jan Zika and Jan Černý. Fučík was put in charge of political work and press propaganda. In 1941 and early in 1942, Czech factories and work places were being flooded with underground journals and leaflets. These mobilized the people to fight against fascism and kindled their love for the Soviet Union and the heroic Soviet Army. Fučík's chief task was the underground publication of RUDÉ PRÁVO and several other papers. When, in the year 1942, the Nazis arranged an anti-Soviet exhibition in Prague, he wrote and published an illegal pamphlet, Guide to the Exhibition "Soviet Paradise" and to Soviet Reality. He also published the Constitution of the U. S. S. R., and got out a typed edition of the History of the
CPSU(B) as well as many leaflets against the Hitler occupying forces. He was one of the organizers of the national-revolutionary committees, following the directives of Klement Gottwald from Moscow. In an illegal leaflet, *May Day, 1941*, he wrote:

"Yes, we are underground. Not like the buried dead but like a grain germinating the socialist harvest, which will burst out in the spring sun throughout the world. May First is a harbinger of that spring. Spring of a free man, spring of peoples and their brotherhood, spring of all humanity. We are going towards that spring even now in the darkness of the underground."

At the greatest pitch of Fučík's heroic struggle for the liberation of the people from the fascist occupying forces, the Gestapo noose was tightened around this great fighter who knew only one command: to fight for the freedom of the nation and the victory of Socialism. For that he worked, for that he fought, for that he was hounded by the police and the administration of the pre-Munich Republic, for that he was imprisoned, for that he never had time for personal and private life, for that he was persecuted by the Gestapo and for that he was finally executed.

The Gestapo was searching feverishly for the leadership of the Communist Party, endeavouring to liquidate the underground movement. Thousands of Communists, thousands of Czech patriots were arrested, tortured to death and executed, thousands of the finest people, nameless heroes who loved their country and fought for its freedom. Fučík was arrested in Prague by the Gestapo on April 24th, 1942, and imprisoned in Pankrác prison's cell No. 267 until the spring of 1943.
He has described how he was arrested in *Report from the Gallows*. At that time no one knew the facts disclosed at the trial of a group of conspirators in 1952, when it was proved that one of the conspirators who had made his way into the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, working in it for many years and therefore enjoying Fučík's full confidence, had betrayed his comrades when he was arrested by the Gestapo in 1939, and had been given his freedom in return. This traitor himself admitted that he had led the Gestapo on to Fučík's tracks; he also admitted his guilt and responsibility for the death of many of Fučík's co-workers.

For more than a year the Gestapo tortured Fučík while he was in detention on remand, because they hoped — in vain — that he would disclose the connecting threads to the leadership of the Communist Party, the leadership of the revolutionary struggle against the Nazi occupying forces. Fučík fought and did not surrender even in a fascist prison. He knew that he himself would not survive, but that the people would live in freedom. He was convinced that even as the Soviet Union had shown all mankind the way to a just human order in the October Revolution of 1917, it would now overcome Hitler fascism in the Great Patriotic War and would liberate the peoples from the bloody slavery of fascism. This thought sustained Fučík in those numbered days before his heroic death. After inhuman torture, knowing that he would die he wrote in the Pankrác prison:

"I do not regret this. I regret nothing. I did what was within my strength and did it gladly."

And in days full of physical suffering, questionings and torture, he said to me in the dark Gestapo headquarters in
the Petschek Palace where we met: "I know that I am going to my death. It would take a miracle to get me out of this. But miracles do not happen. Nevertheless believe me that I do not think of death at all."

Evidence of this is his last work, *Report from the Gallows*, written secretly in the prison cell in Pankrác and secretly carried out of the prison, page by page, by the gaol warden A. Kolínský. *Report from the Gallows* mirrors like a crystal pool all the great qualities which went to make up Julius Fučík's heroism: his simplicity and honesty, his ready smiles and the gaiety of a Communist, his love for the Soviet Union and certainty of victory over fascism. From the wisdom of Lenin's and Stalin's teachings, from the invincibility of the world-wide army of the Communist movement, Fučík drew the superhuman strength to write this book. It was because he was aware that he belonged to that great army guided by the teachings of Lenin and Stalin that he had the strength of a hero at his trial before the Nazi court in Berlin on August 25th, 1943.

In his book, *Julius Fučík's Last Battle*, J. Reznik, gives an account of Fučík's conduct in the last days of his life.

"In the courtroom the Presiding Judge Freisler asked Julius Fučík, 'Do you admit that your actions gave aid to the enemy of the Reich, Bolshevik Russia?' And Julius Fučík proudly answered the Nazi hangmen: 'Yes, I helped the Soviet Union, I helped the Red Army. And that is the best thing I did in the forty years of my life.'

"And Fučík continued: 'I became a Communist in the Czechoslovak Republic because I could not and would not reconcile myself to the capitalist regime. I am convinced that other times will follow after
this war. I began to work underground in order to help my people to
drive out the occupying forces and with them the traitors in the
Government of the ‘Protectorate’. But I had more than this in mind.
Our whole struggle would lose its meaning if after liberation those
who brought my people to catastrophe, who pledged loyalty, and long
ago, even before 1938, were preparing the betrayal – if these should
come to power again. It would be senseless if the same politically
blind people should again stand at the head of my country. In other
words, my underground revolutionary activity was directed towards
gaining true liberty for the people, towards preparing the triumph of
a future socialist Czechoslovak State.’

“The red, shaking Freisler began to shout and stamp his
feet, but it did not occur to Fučík to interrupt his speech. He
raised his head high and hurled these words in the face of the
Prosecutor and Judges:

"'Your sentence will now be read to me. I know, it reads – death to
a man! My sentence was pronounced on you long ago. It is written in
the blood of all honest people of the world: Death to fascism! Death
to capitalist slavery! Life to Man! The future to Communism!''"

On September 8th, 1943, the fourteenth day after he was
sentenced, Julius Fučík was executed at 4:30 in the morning
in the Berlin prison in Plötzensee.

When they led him out to die he sang the Internationale.
The SS-men gagged him, but the prisoners of the third block
in Plötzensee heard him and began to sing the proletarian
anthem. Fučík was accompanied to cell No. 4, where the
execution was to be carried out, by the song of millions of
fighters for the happiness of mankind, a song which Fučík
himself had been singing in prison.

His life, his courageous struggle for the freedom of the
people, made Fučík the national hero of the Czechoslovak people. Czechoslovak mines and industrial plants are named after him, and the new, Socialist life for which he died is growing up here. Young Pioneer groups, schools and apprentices’ homes, where Czechoslovak young people are growing up to live decent, honest life of new people, are named after Julius Fučík.

His Report from the Gallows is a book cherished by all peace-loving mankind. It was first published in 1945, after the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the great Soviet Army. It was soon translated into Russian and has appeared to date in 68 languages and 154 editions.

Julius Fučík is dear to all progressive people in the world, because his Report from the Gallows expresses the finest ideas of the heroes who fought and are fighting for the freedom of their country, for a true and happy life for humanity, for peace, against the barbarism of war.

That is why Julius Fučík was awarded in memoriam the highest international honorary Peace Prize at the Second World Congress of Partisans of Peace in Warsaw in 1950 for his Report from the Gallows. In this book burns Fučík’s love for his country, for its free and peaceful life, his love for the Soviet Union, which was the guiding star of his life, and his love for the people to whom he dedicated his last testament:

“People, I have loved you. Be on your guard!”

Prague, March 1955.