

CZECHS WILL OPEN MASARYK INQUIRY

'48 Death to Be Investigated

—Defense Chief Quits

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By United Press International

PRAGUE, April 3 — The Czechoslovak State Prosecutor's Office announced today that it would reinvestigate the controversial death of Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk 20 years ago.

The body of Dr. Masaryk, son of the founder of Czechoslovakia, Thomas G. Masaryk, was found in the courtyard of the Foreign Ministry on March 10, 1948.

The Communist regime, which had just seized power, said he had committed suicide by jumping from a bathroom window. For two decades belief has circulated both here and abroad that he was murdered.

[In another development of the continuing democratization in Czechoslovakia, the Defense Minister, Gen. Bohumir Lomsky, offered his resignation at a session of the Central Committee of the Communist party.]

Plans for a new inquiry into the Masaryk case were announced by Frantisek Zabransky, a deputy prosecutor, apparently in response to a demand for such an investigation

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published yesterday in Student, a weekly of the Czechoslovak student organization.

Student listed these facts to back its charge that Dr. Masaryk had met with foul play:

¶Frantisek Borkovec, deputy security chief of the Ministry of Interior, and a police physician, Dr. Jaromir Tepy, noted "great disorder" in Dr. Masaryk's sleeping room and broken glass in the bathroom, as if a fight had taken place.

¶Dr. Tepy discovered several physical signs of mortal terror that were said to be incongruous in case of a suicide.

¶Bohumil Prihoda, Dr. Masaryk's servant, testified that the bathroom window, which was found wide open, usually was shut because it was eight feet above the floor.

¶Vilibald Hoffmann, a police officer, testified that he had found butts of 14 cigarette brands in ashtrays in the bedroom. At least 10 of these brands were not those familiar to Dr. Masaryk, Mr. Prihoda confirmed later.

¶Oskar Klinger, Dr. Masaryk's personal physician, was not allowed to examine the body.

¶The certificate on the autopsy was falsified, the student newspaper charged. The document was signed by a Professor Hajek, a pathologist, but Dr. Hajek later admitted he had never examined the body.

U.S. Author Recalls Event

Marcia Davenport, the American author who was a friend of Dr. Jan Masaryk at the time of his death, said here yesterday: "I do not think he premeditatedly committed suicide or intentionally jumped out that window."

In reacting to the news from Prague, Mrs. Davenport said she thought that it would be superficial of her to summarize her opinions since she had written them with care in the book, "Too Strong for Fantasy," published last October by Charles Scribner's Sons.

She wrote that a few days before his death, Dr. Masaryk asked her to leave Prague, where she had an apartment, and go to London. He planned to join her shortly and they were to marry, she added.

She wrote of the situation in Czechoslovakia just before she left:

"Meanwhile the horrors and the tragedies piled up. On Friday Dr. Prokop Drtina, the Min-

ister of Justice, was found gravely injured on the pavement outside his house; he had attempted suicide, they said, by jumping from a third-floor window.

"On Saturday, the 28th, Jan came from the Hrad [the Presidential palace] in dreadful depression. [President Edvard] Benes had left the Hrad, he said, for the last time and gone with his wife to his own house in the country at Sezimovo Usti. He was a totally broken man, his tenure of the presidency a phantasm. Jan was alone, face to face with the dead republic and its murderers."

Mrs. Davenport flew to London, and it was there she learned of Dr. Masaryk's death. Two men who had known the minister later told her, she wrote, that he said he planned to escape by plane on March 10. One of them added that Dr. Masaryk had changed this to say he intended to commit suicide.

The author thought it probable that Dr. Masaryk's plan to escape was discovered. She told of talking to many people who supplied details. She wrote that she cannot say with certainty what happened, then continues:

"But from all that I know, from the description of the bedroom and the bathroom and the bathroom window-sill, below which there was a window-seat, I weigh the probability that there was a struggle at the bathroom window. This could have followed a surprise intrusion into Jan's room by whoever—probably plural—came to tell him that his plan to escape was known and that he would never get out alive.

"The disorder of the bedroom suggests protest and violence there; the condition of the bathroom suggests a struggle across the room towards the window, to which he was pushed backwards. When he struggled at being forced over the sill, he was struck on the right side of his head—one version said, shot behind the right ear—and, unconscious, dropped out of the window."

She concluded that Dr. Masaryk was a fastidious man who would not choose a death of "public gruesomeness" and that he had in his possession sedatives and sleeping pills "sufficient to commit suicide by taking a lethal overdose."