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Czech Asks Inquiry On Masaryk Death

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PRAGUE, April 2—The first public demand for an investigation of charges that Dr. Jan Masaryk was murdered, including a hint that the Soviet secret police might have been involved, was published here today.

The request came in the form of an open letter to the Attorney General by Ivan Svitak, a philosopher, published in Student, weekly of the National Student Organization. The question to which Mr. Svitak demanded an answer was this:

"Was Jan Masaryk murdered 20 years ago as the first victim on the road to a totalitarian dictatorship?"

Dr. Masaryk, Foreign Minister at his death and revered

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as the son of Thomas G. Masaryk, founder of Czechoslovakia, died during the night of March 9-10, 1948. His body was found in the early morning in the courtyard of the Foreign Ministry.

The official explanation by the Communist Government, which had just achieved power, was suicide. But in Czechoslovakia and the rest of the world doubt has never been dispelled.

Even without its political challenge, Mr. Svitak's question touches a sensitive issue at a time when Czechoslovakia searches for the truth about her last two decades.

Mr. Svitak said evidence had been found in the initial investigation of the death connecting Maj. Franz Schramm to the case. Later Major Schramm was a liaison officer between the Czechoslovak and Soviet security services, Mr. Svitak said.

The Soviet secret police was headed at that time by Lavrenti P. Beria, who was executed on treason charges in 1953 after Stalin's death.

Major Schramm was murdered in the summer of 1948, according to Mr. Svitak, perhaps by agents from the West. Mr. Svitak lists a number of persons connected with the initial investigation who died shortly thereafter under suspicious circumstances:

Struggle Is Reported

As possible evidence of murder, Mr. Svitak cites various reports of witnesses indicating that other persons were in Dr. Masaryk's room on his last night and that a struggle might have taken place. Mr. Svitak charged also that the Foreign Minister's physician had not been allowed to see the body and that the official autopsy report had been forged. The

doctor who signed it had not been closer to the body than 10 feet, Dr. Svitak said.

Czechoslovaks, meanwhile, were concentrating on a mysterious death that was discovered today. Dr. Jozef Brestansky, deputy president of the Supreme Court, was found hanged in a forest at Babice, about 20 miles from here. The death was called a suicide.

Dr. Brestansky disappeared last Thursday. He was recently charged with drafting a law for the rehabilitation of those who had been unjustly tried and sentenced in the Stalinist purges of the nineteen-fifties.

According to police spokesmen, Dr. Brestansky, who was 42 years old, had learned that Slovak newspapers had raised doubts about his suitability for the rehabilitation task. The newspapers charged that as a judge in Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, he had himself passed harsh sentences in a 1955 case based on "artificially construed" charges.

Two Officials Resign

At the plenary session of the party's Central Committee, which is discussing leadership changes and the party's program of action, two officials offered their resignations today. Both had been under criticism since Alexander Dubcek replaced Antonin Novotny as First Secretary last January.

They were Jiri Hendrych and Vladimir Koucky, secretaries of the Central Committee. Mr. Hendrych has already been replaced by Cestmir Cisar as chief of ideological matters. Mr. Koucky is expected to cede his place to Josef Lenart, who will conduct the international relations of the party.

Mr. Lenart, now Premier, is expected to lose that post in the Government reshuffle that the Central Committee will propose at the end of its session late this week.