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A disquieting yet reassuring reality of our human species is great calamities bring out the best in us. A classic example of the moment is the Chilean mine disaster.

An apparent hopeless disaster when it first occurred was turned by human ingenuity, courage, dedication and determination into a triumph shared by the world.

As the 33 miners, trapped a kilometer underground for more than two months, were brought individually to the surface, the world literally wept with relief, pride, joy. We all suffered with the kinfolk, all felt the same emotion.

Isn't it too bad that it takes unimaginable disaster to bring this quality out in humans? And it's not only human disasters that provoke the sentiment.

Remember some years back when a couple of whales in the Arctic were trapped by the freeze up, and seemed destined to die until humans began the seemingly thankless task of making ice holes so the whales could breathe, leading them to open water?

Some thought it a waste of time; yet again

the world empathized with the whales, and cheered the rescuers on.

It made little sense, since the Inuit would have made short work of the whales without outside interference, yet it was the right thing to do for fellow creatures in mortal peril. We, in Canada, have our share of trapped miners, albeit none so dramatic, long-lasting

Canada's own miner miracle

By Peter Worthington

and initially hopeless as the Chilean one.

One need only recall disasters at the Springhill coal mine in Nova Scotia — deepest in the world at some five kilometers. In 1891, 125 miners died in a coal dust fire, and then in 1956, around this time of year, a runaway mine train hit a power line. The resulting explosion and fire killed 39 and trapped others. The Soviet invasion of Hungary and the Suez war, at the same time, overshadowed the disaster.

Then in 1958, some 13,000-feet deep, a "bump" (underground earthquake) trapped 174 miners, of whom 100 died. I was a young reporter for the Toronto Telegram at Springhill, and after all hope had been given up for more survivors, 12 were found.

Heroism among fellow miners was endemic.

Without masks (methane gas) rescuers tunneled through 25 metres of earth and rubble to save the 12 men six days later.

Then another six were found in a trapped pocket, three feet high, without food or water. Two days of digging rescued them — and a hero was born in Maurice Ruddick, whose singing and cheery optimism kept morale high.

Ruddick, a black man, became Canada's citizen of the year and a Canadian folk hero. All of us on the Tely team led by Bert Petlock and great journalists like Phyl Griffiths and Dorothy Howarth, were emotionally shaken by the fortitude and composure of the miners as they were rescued.

Those who work deep in mines are a breed apart. Prince Philip visited the site at the height of the rescue, and the world watched breathlessly. The town of Springhill was awarded the Carnegie Hero Medal for its rescue efforts.

In 1959 the mine was closed forever. Ironically, the 1956 and 1958 disasters occurred in late October, now forgotten everywhere but in Nova Scotia and in song — The Ballad of Springhill

While the rescue at Chile mine has justifiably captured the world's imagination, it was no greater a miracle of individual and collective courage of rescue and survival than at Springhill, nova Scotia, 52 years ago this October.

Source Toronto Sun, October 14, 2010

Prague might block EU-Canada trade agreement

The Czech Republic might block a trade agreement between the European Union and Canada over visas re-imposed by Ottawa on Czech citizens, the Czech ambassador to the EU, Milena Vicenová, told Czech Radio on Friday.

Ms. Vicenová said that Prague is considering rejecting the agreement which is being negotiated; the deal should facilitate trade between the EU and Canada, and is expected to yield billions of euros.

The agreement has to be approved by the parliaments of all EU member states; Ms. Vicenová said if Canada does not change its position on the visa issue, Czech lawmakers might reject the treaty. Prague has been pushing for the abolition of Canadian visas for Czech citizens ever since they were re-imposed in July 2009, following a wave of asylum applications, many of them from Romanians. Source radio.cz

TOP 09 wins polls to Prague City Assembly, trailed by ODS, CSSD

TOP 09, a Czech junior ruling party, won the October 15-16 local elections in Prague, trailed by 7 percent by the senior ruling Civic Democrats (ODS) who thus lost the election battle for the City Assembly for the first time, www.volby.cz said after the votes in all wards were counted.

The Social Democrats (CSSD), the senior opposition party on the national level, finished third. The last party to enter the city assembly are the opposition Communists (KSCM). The other junior government party, Public Affairs (VV), failed to enter the City Assembly. The turnout was 44.43 percent, which is more than in the previous elections four

years ago. Prague has been traditionally a stronghold of the right.

In the past election term, the City Hall was dominated by the ODS that repeatedly came under criticism for numerous scandals and controversies, including suspected corruption.

TOP 09, a newcomer in local elections, was supported by 30.26 percent of voters. The ODS gained 23.1 percent of the vote and the CSSD 17.85 percent. In the City Assembly, that newly has 63 seats, TOP 09 won 26 seats, the ODS 20, the CSSD 14 and the KSCM three seats.

Any pair out of the three most successful parties can form a coalition.

VV, like the coalition

of the Greens (SZ) and the Independent Candidates (SNK-ED), actually did cross the 5 percent threshold. However, as a result of a recent change to the election system, pushed through by the ODS assemblymen and dividing Prague into seven election wards instead of one, TOP 09 and the ODS will gain a total of eight more seats in the City Assembly than what they would get if the previous election rules were valid.

TOP 09 and the ODS enjoy this extra gain to the detriment of VV, SNK-ED and the KSCM, according to CTK's calculations.

The SZ said it will lodge a complaint in this respect to the Supreme Administrative Court.,By this manipula-

tion [division of Prague into seven election districts] the ODS harmed the voters of the SZ-SNK-ED coalition and other medium-sized and minor parties," SZ chairman Ondrej Liska said.

In 2006, the elections to the Prague City Assembly, which are also regional elections as Prague is one of the country's 14 self-rule regions, were crushingly won by the ODS with 54.4 percent of the vote. The CSSD lagged far behind with 15.9 percent.

The other parties to enter the assembly were the KSCM (7.9 percent), the SZ (7.8) and the SNK-ED (5.4). The turnout was 42.2 percent.

Source www.einnews.com/news, author: www.ck.cz

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Me & China: Billboards, autograph mobbings, BBQ shark and more

For ND by Martin Mayer

If you've ever wondered whether *The Twilight Zone* truly exists, let me tell you, it does. While it certainly isn't anything like the TV show from the 1960s, or feature that iconic "ta-na-na-na" theme, it sure is out there. And for me, that *Twilight Zone* is a country that has helped propel my music career - China.

It all started almost ten years ago. Thanks to a discovery through my website by my Chinese agents back in 2001, I found myself at the brink of an incredible and unforgettable opportunity - to tour and perform in one of the largest countries in the world. Little did I know what awaited me on a 16-city trek through this unbelievable journey. It was billed as the largest tour of any international artist in China's modern history.

Autograph mobbings, police escorts, fans going crazy, bodyguards, billboards, national TV audiences of more than a billion people... how could one not want to go back. China in 2001 proved to be a major turning point, not only in my career, but also my life. I had finally proven that a project of this magnitude and challenge was something I could pull off. And did. With great success.

After taking years of giving myself completely to music, I took a step back to write, entrench myself in life, and enjoy the fruits of my labour. Returning for a short visit in 2002 and then a solo concert in 2009, I know China was wanting me back. And I wanted back too.

Through the generosity and continued support of my Chinese agents, who have also become my close friends, I was once again put in the middle of that blast of a roller-coaster ride, with a 6-city concert tour of southern China this past July. Beginning with the highly-enjoyable, much-talked-about 14-hour transcontinental airplane ride (insert sarcasm here), the tour started in Ningbo, an hour-and-a-half south of Shanghai.

The next day's concert took place at the beautiful Ningbo Grand Theatre. It was founded in 2004, and designed by famous French architect Frederic Rolland. With an enthusiastic audience in its 1,500 seats, my Chinese fans once again gave me a resoundingly warm welcome back to China. It's interesting to note that the Ningbo Grand Theatre has a copy of Michelangelo's famous statue "David" in its square. It was a gift to the people of Ningbo from the city of Florence, Italy.

I should mention at this point that southern China during the summer months, enjoys temperatures between 33 to 39°C. And with the humidity from an

average rain fall of 175 mm in the months of June and July, even shorts and a t-shirt felt like too much on some days. You shower in the morning, but you're already sweating 10 minutes after getting out from the air-conditioned hotel.

Of the next stops on the tour, including Guangzhou, Nanning, Dongguan and Shenzhen - where the crowd of 1,200 mobbed me in the lobby for autographs - my favorite has got to be our 3-day stay in beautiful Nanning. Known appropriately as the 'green city', this little gem has some unbelievable experiences in store. When I first arrived at the Nanning Theatre for the show's sound check, I was blown away by a 20 foot high billboard promoting the concert. This billboard faced the main road, which with China's traffic, had the standard 6 lanes in each direction. (Canada take note, we need those lanes here). Standing next to the billboard for my photos was not only surreal, it once again reaffirmed that this was indeed my version of *The Twilight Zone*, as with my relative unknown in Canada, it's hard to comprehend how this happens here.

Inside the theatre was another 20 foot sign. This one sat behind the piano and was a huge version of my name, painstakingly designed and painted by the company's art director. He asked if I could enter the stage through the middle of my name. Looking like an ant trying to do so, I imagine this is what it feels like for Drew Carey to walk through the stage doors at *Price is Right*.

After another blast of a show and a sold-out crowd - all the venues on the tour were sold-out and fans eagerly waited after the show for

autographs - I had the chance to relax with my agent, and the local promoter, over some fine Chinese dishes. While in North America it's standard that each person orders their own dish, you eat, finish and you go, in China, it's easily a three- to four-hour event. Numerous dishes, both vegetarian and meat, are ordered and everyone takes as much or as little of each dish as they want. Truly the best way to taste and sample their local cuisine. And make no mistake about it, each region has their own specialties, which you won't find in other cities. **The next two days** were days off in Nanning while

waiting to go to the next stop on the tour. My agent and I ventured into the local night market, and if you're ever looking to spend your evening experiencing different kinds of food, including the exotic kind, this is the place to go. The restaurants on this street are all closed during the day, and then open around 7 p.m. Not knowing why they were closed during the day, we understood when they told us they were open until 4 a.m.! I tried BBQ shark, served on kabob skewers, and was adventurous enough to try BBQ crocodile too.

The shark was ridiculously delicious, full of flavour with various spices and tasting like a juicy blend of chicken and pork. I had three skewers that night, and went back for four more the next day. Sorry Jaws! The crocodile wasn't much to write about, lack

of flavour and a bit more rubbery. Then of course there was the four-hour dinner after, with oysters so big, they couldn't fit into our mouths.

Billboards, autograph mobbings, BBQ shark and more ... yet another unforgettable trip. And as someone who can walk down Robson Street in Vancouver without being recognized, it's very much a different story in China, my equivalent to *The Twilight Zone*. My journey allowed me to experience great food, fantastic places, unforgettable concert halls, and take with me memories that will last more than a life time.

As the ending of this article is being written, my agents are working to once again bring me back to China. I can happily say that I truly can't wait!

Photo archive of author

History: The Battle of White Mountain

By Jan Velinger

In edition of Czechs in History Radio Prague looks at the historical significance and fallout of the Battle of White Mountain, one of the most famous events in Czech history every student here at one time has learned by heart.

The date of the battle was November 8th, 1620. The setting: a small, normally quiet hillside, just outside of Prague. But, the day would see a disappointingly one-sided affair, a battle that took less than two hours to lose by the Czech nobility. Defeated were the Protestants of the Bohemian Estates' army, vanquished by Austrian Imperial and Catholic forces. In a sense, the battle was an overture. The first military clash of many in the complex many-phased and multifaceted conflict that would sweep and divide Europe: the Thirty Years' War. The continent would be split along vicious, unrelenting religious and political lines. The players, the conflict, the event

from which the kingdom of Bohemia never recovered - keep reading to find out more.

The year was 1618 and political and religious tensions in the kingdom of Bohemia were balanced on a blade's edge. Much of the largely Protestant nobility was already deeply regretting the election of Habsburg Ferdinand II as king of Bohemia just one year before. The monarch had showed himself to be an impassioned Catholic with little respect for the religious treaty, the so-called Majestat, or Majestic Letter, signed, albeit reluctantly, by one of Emperor Rudolf II, in 1609. That document of law acknowledged and tolerated the existence of non-Catholic denominations, principles Ferdinand II neglected in his religious zeal. To make matters worse, the monarch's absolutist-style rule, showed little respect for the aristocracy. Late May, 1618, tensions reached their peak. The Bohemi-

an nobility met in Prague despite a warning from Vienna from Emperor Mathias, to discuss the situation. The next day, led by such figures as Vaclav Budovec and Jindrich Mathias Thurn, the enraged aristocrats decided to act...

The victims of their wrath proved to be two royal councilors cornered in their office at Prague Castle. Loyal Catholics, the men were thrown from the 2nd floor window of the Castle's Ludvik wing, in what would come to be known as the First Defenestration of Prague. Falling 17 meters the men must have believed they were falling to their deaths. But, to everyone's surprise, including their own, they suffered only relatively minor bruises. Later, Catholic followers would attribute their miracle landing to holy intervention by the Virgin Mary. In reality, it was both the incline of the ditch into which they fell, as well as underbrush onto which they landed that probably saved their lives. Their luck was in good measure: the councilors also dodged several pot shots fired at them from above.

Soon, cooler heads among the nobility began to prevail, but by now it was clearly too late. Royal officials had been accosted; the act could not be undone.

At first the nobles tried to demonstrate that their protest was not direct aggression against their ruler, but Emperor Mathias would have none of it. From the very start he labeled the insurgency as a rebellion, and so the stage was set. The nobility then elected a thirty member directorate made up of noblemen, knights, and burghers in equal measure. They issued an apology in self-defense to try and calm the situation but to no avail: the directorate served instead as a magnet, becoming a central body for organizing the new Estates army. A mercenary army that would be formed, after hundreds of anti-Catholics, hearing of the rebellion, made their way to Prague.

Finally, completing the rebellion, bringing it full circle: the Estates deposed

Michaela is a daughter of a British mother and a Czech father, Sue and Peter Schubert. The latter was in Vienna en route from a conference on "Foundations of International Understanding and Coexistence" to Czechoslovakia at the time of the Soviet-led invasion in 1968. He helped to organize the public demonstration there, and eventually decided to leave for Ottawa, Canada.

Michaela, it seems that at 24 you know exactly what you want to do and how to achieve this goal. Wherefrom does this self-confidence come?

I certainly don't feel like I know exactly what to do or how to accomplish it! I know what interests me, and like everyone else, I just do my best to set myself on paths that will lead to a career in my specific interests. I can't always define why a certain subject intrigues me, but I always know when I have found an interest – it's like an adrenaline rush; I immediately want to start reading and asking and learning more about it.

Does this insight come from school or did the parents help?

My parents encourage my scientific interests, and are always ready to help me think of tactics to become more involved in research and the scientific community. Honestly, I think school would be far more accurately described as an environment in which an individual can discover his or her own interests than as an environment that guides those individuals to their interests.

What are your parents doing?

While semi-retired, my father is working as interpreter and translator, and when he is not at work, spends his time doing everything from investing to gardening. My mother is a psychiatric nurse, and rarely is not at work! They also enjoy exploring the globe together when they have time for vacationing.

What do you know about the past, from where did your father come?

My father came from Czechoslovakia, where he was born shortly after the end of the Second World War and was forced to leave at the time of the Soviet invasion. He grew up in a different way from many of my friends' fathers, and as such, has taught me many things about his experiences in his youth.

Have you ever thought about the difference in young people making their choice and their reasons there and here in Canada both then and now?

Unfortunately, I do not know much about the environment for young people making decisions at that time. However, I am sure that I have many more opportunities to explore different options and try new things than the youth in Czechoslovakia during my father's time did. From my father's stories, life seems much easier here and now than it was for him in his youth.

How did your parents support

your decisions?

My parents have helped me in many ways! My father introduced me to my first research supervisor, and I received both financial assistance and intangible support from my parents throughout my university career. They have certainly contributed

Michaela was born in Edmonton, Alberta... she grew up in a free country with only her parents restricting – albeit trying for the opposite – her plans. In the meantime, her plans for future and life expectations are admirable.

to the wide range of options I have had.

Would a disagreement on the part of your parents change your plans? Would it make a difference?

A disagreement on the part of my parents would not change my plans, because I have a good idea of what I want to do and I am already on my way to succeeded in my chosen career. However, it would certainly be disappointing, and it might make it more diffi-

plinary and a very translational field. I think the breadth of research specialties that all come together in that topic fires up my interest, and I also feel that it is very worthwhile to devote time to tackling challenging diseases that often get insufficient attention and funding. Furthermore,

transplantation for pediatric cancers. Specifically, I am interested in the ability of such grafts to attack cancers by immunological methods, and I would like to study ways of increasing this "graft versus cancer" effect while minimizing harmful effects on the children receiving the trans-

plants.

Do you have any idea regarding your future place of work (city, institution, country), and why precisely there?

I know that I would certainly prefer to live in Canada when I have finished my studies. However, I am also aware that I must go where the research I enjoy is being done – I simply hope that I can find such research being conducted in my home country!

It seems that research and

Why did you spend such a long time in Vienna?

At the time, my father worked as



The interview could be realized thanks to the care of Radka Mayer, member of the Nový domov Consultation Board.

cult to achieve my goals without their support.

Your field of studies is very demanding. When have you realized that you want to specialize in this area? What (or who) led you to this subject? And Children sick with cancer – these are above all very sad accounts. How does it attract you and when did you decide to dedicate your life to this field?

As I said, I cannot always define what generates my interest in a subject. However, I have enjoyed biology and medicine all my life, and my specific interest – immunotherapy and bone marrow transplantation in children's cancers – is a very interdisci-

plinary and a very translational field. Because he held this job for over seven years, my younger brother and I were raised in Austria during our younger years, learning to speak German and attending an international school with children from all over the world.

Apparently, your own research laboratory is something to be expected in your future. What would you like to do in such a lab? Do you have a guru, someone, whose example you would like to follow in your research work?

When I have a research laboratory of my own, I would like to study bone marrow and stem cell

scholarly activities in general require everything from a man, his or her all. Nevertheless, you have so many different and active hobbies – writing, photography, sports, and music. How do you find the time?

Unfortunately, I find it very difficult to maintain multiple hobbies. During the school-year, when I have classes as well as research, I find myself limited to only one or two ways to relax – this year, I have been doing mostly photography and writing. When classes are not in session, however, I occasionally have a little time on the weekends to engage in one of my more resource-intensive hobbies, and I have been able to do a

little cycling and SCUBA diving so far this summer.

What do you consider to be your greatest success(es) both in your studies and your extracurricular activities?

Any successes I have had so far have merely been stepping-stones. I am very proud of the research work I have thus far accomplished, especially the year of oncology research I conducted during my undergraduate career. However, I know that the challenges only increase, and so I simply look forward to the next opportunity to move from one stepping-stone to the next.

In my extracurricular activities, I think I would say that the same is true to a lesser degree. I am extremely proud of my time spent in triathlon, during which completed a half-Iron man race and was invited to compete in the short-course ITU Age Group World Championships. I have sadly not been able to participate much in triathlon during my first year of graduate school, but when transportation becomes easier and my schedule is more self-determined, I hope to begin racing again.

An adage about people who do many things at once says that they are chasing too many hares, with the understanding that they likely catch none. Are you not at all concerned that with so many interests, you would not be able to give your main work its due?

Again, now that my school and work have become so complex, I am no longer able to maintain most of my interests on a day-to-day basis. I try to pursue one or two of them (for instance, I enjoy photography almost every day, even if I can only devote a few minutes to it), but for the most part, they remain interests that I visit occasionally at best.

Have you ever visited the present-day Czech Republic? If so, what interested you most?

I have only visited the present-day Czech Republic as a young child, and so I am not able to draw conclusions from that as an adult. However, I have seen that Czech researchers are making great strides in cancer research, and I would be very interested in learning how their methods are different from the ones used here, and how research in the Czech Republic is conducted.

One day, you may have children of your own – what would you wish for them?

If I were to have children, I would wish for them the same thing that I wish for children today and in the future – that they have a full life with the experiences I was able to have as a child. There seem to be fewer opportunities these days for children to be unsupervised, to explore, to spend time in natural environments, and to exercise their bodies and imaginations. I would hope that these freedoms of my own childhood are not lost as the world becomes more crowded and more technologically-oriented.



One of the most admired technical and historical monuments in the Czech Republic, the Prague Orloj, or Prague Astronomical Clock, celebrates its 600th anniversary this year.

The pride of the Old Town Hall was designed by Mikuláš of Kadaň at the request of the town councillors in 1410 and is unique around the world.

Thanks to the astronomical clock, it was possible from that time on in a multicultural city, which Prague undoubtedly was, to read the time using an alternate method. With the unveiling of the astronomical clock, Prague took its place among such Medieval metropolises as Padua, Bern and Strasbourg. The astronomical clock has been improved and repaired several times throughout its existence, as it has certainly been through its fair share of hardships. In the 18th century it was nearly lost forever to the scrap heap, while the most recent great misfortune came at the very end of the Second World War when the Old Town Hall was bombed out. It was, nevertheless, successfully repaired in the end. With about three quarters of the old original parts, it is still functional and is thus the most well preserved of its kind across the

globe, though the equator is not marked. The signs of the zodiac can be seen around the astrolabe's perimeter.

On the outer ring of the clock, golden numerals indicate Old Czech Time (or Italian time), according to which the day be-

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THE PRAGUE ORLOJ celebrates 600 years

gan at sunset. Central European Time (or Old German Time) is indicated by the golden hand. Essentially, this is the time by which we order our day, though the clock did not sound the time until after the post-war reconstruction of 1948.

A unique feature of the Old Town astronomical clock is that it shows Babylonian time, which was calculated from sunrise to sunset and thus the duration of hours changed with the seasons, i.e. longer in summer than in winter. The Prague Orloj is the only one in the world that measures this time.

The lower part of the clock features a calendar dial which shows the day and its place in the week as well as the month and year. Two hands of the clock deserve particular attention. One, with an icon of the Moon, shows the phase of the Moon (i.e. its waxing and waning). The second, with an icon of the Sun, is the most important part of the clock as the astrolabe is adjusted according to local solar time. The Sun is located on the same arm as the golden hand indicating the time.

Let's not forget the Apostles



Another feature of the Prague Orloj is the procession of the Apostles. At the top of every hour from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., the Apostles appear in the clock's upper windows with their special attributes in hand.

The procession was fabricated by the sculptor and woodcarver Vojtěch Sucharda – twice! The first time in 1912, and again after the clock was damaged by fire at the end of the Second World War. A small figure of a rooster, symbolising life, is placed above these windows. Its crow always concludes the parade of the Apostles. Flanking the clock, you can see four animated figures. On the left side, Vanity is represented by the figure holding a mirror. The wooden statue nods

its head while admiring himself in the mirror. The Miser holds in his hands a cane and a purse which he waves while shaking his head disapprovingly. Both figures were destroyed during WWII and were replaced with copies from the mid-20th century.

The figure of Death, or the Skeleton, survived the Old Town Hall fire and has been part of the clock since the 15th century. The Skeleton turns an hourglass with which it counts down human life, thereby reminding us with its chime and concurrent oscillation of our inevitable fate. The figure of the Turk is depicted with a lute and symbolises profligacy and lust as human vices. The clock also bears statues of Michael the Archangel, a Philosopher, an Astronomer and a Chronicler.

The little brothers
Though the Prague Orloj is the most famous and oldest astronomical clock in the Czech Republic, lovers of complex clockworks can find items of interest elsewhere as well. The northern façade of the Olomouc Town Hall (<http://www.tourism.olomouc.eu/>) is graced by an astronomical clock dating back to the 15th century. During WWII, however, it was so heavily damaged that the Olomouc councillors decided to replace it with a new model in the spirit of the then popular aesthetic, i.e. in the style of socialist realism. A secessionist astronomical clock from the start of the 20th century also can be found on the town-hall tower in Litomyšl (www.litomysl.cz). T

he astronomical clock on the New Town Hall in Prostějov (www.mestopv.cz) also originated in the same period. For something different, visit the Ostrava Municipal Museum (www.os-trmuz.cz), which houses an indoor astronomical clock. It was constructed by Jan Mašek, an officer of the Vítkovice steelworks, during the first third of the 20th century.

You can admire yet another specimen of human creativity at the Jan Amos Comenius Museum in Uherský Brod (www.mjakub.cz/), which houses the so-called Nivnice. Orloj, constructed by local carpenter Josef Lukeš 90 years ago for the residents of Nivnice. *Photo euroagentur.com Source CzechTourism.cz*



History: The Battle of White ...

from pg. 8 their Habsburg ruler Ferdinand II in 1619, and appointed Frederick of the Palatinate as the new king of Bohemia. The hope was that Frederick, who was nephew of James I in England, would be able to secure support and funds from abroad; in reality he would remain isolated. The Winter King, as he would come to be known, would last barely more than one season, forced to flee from the kingdom of Bohemia after the decisive battle of White Mountain. The start of the year 1620 saw the advantage shift to Austrian forces - a year before, Ferdinand II secured funds from Spain and support from Poland. The Czech lands, by contrast found themselves short of monetary funds and internationally isolated. By the third week of September united Imperial and Catholic League forces met in the south Bohemian town of Ceske Budejovice, one side led by Maximilian of Bavaria, the other by Karel Bonaventura Buquoy. Both ardent supporters of the Counter-Reformation, entrusted to see it through. They began to move on Bohemia.

Meanwhile, caught off guard, the Estate armies of Christian of Anhalt and Jindrich Matyas Thurn met in Jindrichuv Hradec, failing to stop the advance of Austrian forces all the way up to Pisek. In west Bohemia, commander Arnost Mansfeld was also forced to withdraw to the town of Pilsen. Shortly after, the Imperial and Catholic forces negotiated a cease-fire with Mansfeld, while awaiting reinforcements. The Estates army, meanwhile, stationed itself in Rokycany. The initiative slipping from their grasp, the Estates forces could only hope on the on-set of winter would bring any further action to an end for the rest of the year... That was not, however, the case. The enemy armies began to move, and although the forces met in a skirmish, trying to prevent them from gaining further ground, the Catholic League and Imperial forces then circumvented the Estates army, heading directly for Prague.

On the night of November 7th part of the Estates army, led by Thurn, however were able to pass their enemies, and take up an advantageous position at White Mountain, known in Czech as Bila Hora. The morning of the 8th of November the Estates army was ready at Bila Hora in two echelons, formed of foot-soldiers, cavalry, and reserves. The right wing flanking the Hvezda arboretum, the left, led by Thurn himself, backs against the Ruzyně hillock. Cannons were set up. Behind their positions 5,000 riders. Another 600 nearby. In all the Estates army numbered about 15,000 men. This against the encroaching Catholic and Imperial armies whose number was almost twice that: some 27,000, taking position on the field, their cannons lined in a row out front. Ready to do battle. Yet now that it had come to it, neither side seemed willing to engage. In the end a small force was sent forth to test the waters, to engage the enemy, simply to see how the Protestants would react. Fighting began just after noon. There was surprise on both sides, none greater, than the shock that part of the Estates forces began to fold under that first attack. Incredibly Thurn's well-trained mercenaries suddenly took to their heels. Other units, seeing them go, followed behind. Meanwhile, a cavalry charge led by Christian of Anhalt inspired a momentary turn but was not supported, and the counter attack cut through his legion with devastating effect. The battle was just about sealed. Most ran now; will several key military leaders fell into enemy hands. With improper support, a lack of unity prevailing, and a lack of steadfastness in the end, the day was lost before it had even properly begun.

Two thousand lay dead or dying, while others were routed and captured. The Bohemian uprising had been crushed. Still, the great majority of Estates forces had retreated, remaining intact. They could have fought another day, they could have still fought for Prague. The Habsburgs triumphed and could set about re-Catholicizing Bohemia, punishing all those who remained behind who had taken part in the revolt.

The next year 27 noblemen would be executed on Prague's Old Town Square, and an exodus of tens of thousands from Bohemia would begin. No other than a Habsburg would ever again sit on the Bohemian throne. *Source: Czech Radio 7, Radio Prague <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/czechs-the-battle-of-white-mountain>*