

OBITUARY: *Miloslav Jiřina*



Miloslav Jiřina, 1927–2011

Miloslav's father, as a Czech citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the outbreak of World War I, was conscripted to fight in Russia. He eventually joined units of Czech prisoners of war fighting for an independent Czech state. These were the Czech 'legions', which fought, after the Bolshevik Revolution, with the Whites against the Bolsheviks. After the Whites were defeated the Czech legionaries returned home by way of Siberia and Canada, and were celebrated as heroes in the Czechoslovak Republic (established in 1918).

Miloslav's mother's family had lived in Slovenia, then also a part of Austria-Hungary. After returning to their homeland, which had become the Republic of Czechoslovakia, Miloslav's mother became a successful tailor dressmaker whose 'salon' had several employees. Miloslav's parents, for the times, were married relatively late in life. His mother, a gentle woman, was 36 when Miloslav, her second child, was born on 6th November 1927.

Miloslav's parents bought a modest house in Klatovy, where they lived with their extended family; Miloslav's father became a civil servant. In 1938, with war looming, he was transferred to Trebon where he was unknown. This was fortunate, since after the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, known former Czech legionaries like his father were sent to concentration camps. Had he been in Klatovy, where he had been prominent as head legionary, that would have been his fate.

Miloslav had a happy childhood. His elementary school education was in Klatovy.

His wife to be, the-then Jarmila Skachova, remembers Milo (as he was familiarly called) from April 1939. Her Czech family was expelled from Slovakia after 15th March 1939, when Slovakia became a Slovak State. Both Miloslav and Jarmila were in the same class of year 1 in the 'Realgymnasium' in Trebon, where Miloslav spent his high school years, matriculating in 1946. He then enrolled in Prague's Charles University (Karlova Universita, Praha) as a student of mathematics and mathematical statistics, where he was an undergraduate from 1946 to 1950.

The relationship between Miloslav and Jarmila deepened in their matriculation year, and later when both were students at Charles University. Jarmila was a student in the Faculty of

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