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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY

Towns

RESISTANCE AND CRITICISM

Cultural

Political

MASARYK PEDESTAL, BRNO's Anti-Communist Symbol
At last Removed By Reds.

SOURCE FRANKFURT : A former resident of BRNO who left there in March 1953 and personally observed the absence of the MASARYK pedestal on 28 October 1952.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : March 1953.

EVALUATION COMMENT : This report seems to be accurate. However, the removal of the MASARYK pedestal at BRNO, is reported for the first time. Considering the Communist attitude toward MASARYK, the removal is highly probable. Item Nos. 12221 and 11297/51 state that on the occasion of TG MASARYK's birthday anniversary, many flowers were placed on the pedestal. Item No. 4627/51 states that BRNO's Municipal Council refused funds for the statue of MASARYK in 1951. Monitoring of 27.4.1953, page 954 stated that the population of BRNO will inaugurate a memorial statue on Red Army Square in BRNO in gratitude for the "liberation" by the Red Army.

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After various attempts to curtail the persistent attempts of the BRNO population to honor the memory of MASARYK by placing flowers on the pedestal intended for his statue in the NEMESTI RUDE ARMADY in BRNO, the Communists have at last removed the pedestal altogether, according to source who left the CSR in March 1953.

(Over)

Although source is unable to say exactly when this pedestal was removed, he knows it was no longer there on 28 October 1952. He is unable to say what has become of it.

The MASARYK pedestal has always been a thorn in the side of the Communists. The mass of floral tributes placed there by the populace on 28 October and 7 March was in unflattering contrast to the neglected pedestal of the "Red soldier" statue (RUDOARMEJEC) placed nearby by the Reds in 1948. The people ridiculed this "Red" pedestal calling it the "stove" (KANNA) on account of its shape which strongly resembles that humble household article despite claims that it is a copy of an old Italian style. Floral tributes were never placed there by the people, but when on Communist festivals the "Red" pedestal was decorated with Red flags passers-by satirically remarked "The stove is burning again."

According to source the Red pedestal was removed in 1950 and placed in the STALIN Park (STALINOVY SADY).

The Communist authorities made many attempts to discourage these floral tributes to MASARYK's memory, emblems of the true heart of the people. Police were placed near the pedestal to keep people away from it, but when accused of loitering these they pleaded they were waiting for the street car. As the street car did in fact stop opposite the MASARYK pedestal the Communists had no other alternative but to abolish that excuse by changing the street car stop.

But still the people came. Police confiscated the identity cards of people found placing flowers on the MASARYK pedestal, so that they had to call for them next day at the police station. Some people were even arrested, but the floral tributes continued.

Finally in 1951 the Communists dug up the ground round the pedestal and planted flowers so that it was impossible to reach the stone without trampling on them. This served the double purpose of keeping people away, and accusing them of disrespect if they trampled on the flowers.

Some sources say that in their desperation the Reds finally erected a platform over the stone on which members of the Czech League of Youth danced on Red holidays. Whatever the truth of these stories, the removal of the MASARYK pedestal proves that not even Communism can completely enslave the hearts of a people.

End.