

Image not found or type unknown



Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference

JÓN HJÖRLEIFUR STEFÁNSSON

Jón Hjörleifur Stefánsson, M.A.,
is a Ph.D. candidate, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

In 1928, after the European Division was divided into four new European divisions, the Czechoslovakian Union became part of the Central European Division. The union is now part of the Inter-European Division.

Territory and Statistics

Organized 1919; reorganized 1968.

Territory: Czechia and Slovakia; comprising the Bohemian, Moravia-Silesian, and Slovakian Conferences¹

Statistics as of June 30, 2018: churches 191; membership 9,747; population 16,078,000.

Official Organization

Czechoslovakia declared independence on October 28, 1918, and this new political reality called for reorganization of the church units in the region. The Czechoslovakian Union was organized a year later at a meeting in Brno on November 13-19, 1919.³ It was comprised of five church units: the North Bohemian (German believers), Moravia-Silesian,⁴ and Polish-Silesian Conferences, and the Central Bohemian and the Slovakian Missions.⁵ The territory constituted what “belong[ed] politically to the Czechoslovakian Republic.”⁶

Membership in 1919 was 1,494;⁷ union headquarters was at Dr. Dietrichgasse 3, Troppau.⁸ The union had no institutions. Starting union officers were president, Emil E. Frauchiger; treasurer, Fr. Ludwig; secretary, A. Gomola; and other executive committee members were Bischoff, F. Keffel, Popelka, and Seidl, in addition to the presidents of the Moravia-Silesian and the Polish-Silesian Conferences and of the publishing house.⁹ The union was part of the European Division.

Development of Church Administration and Territory

In the aftermath of World War I, when Poland gained most of East Silesia, the Polish-Silesian Conference dissolved. The new Polish territory became the East Silesia Conference under the Polish Union Mission.¹⁰ The Moravia-Silesian Conference probably absorbed the remaining territory. Due to the changed border, the union lost 535 members, or one third of the membership.¹¹

In 1928 the European Division was divided into four new European divisions, which took effect in 1929. The Czechoslovakian Union became part of the Central European Division.¹²

The organization of the union changed relatively little after its foundation. In about 1931 the Central Bohemian Mission became a conference,¹³ and the Slovakian Mission became the Slovakian Conference in about 1939.¹⁴ World War II caused a temporarily simpler administration: the union was not mentioned (thus possibly dissolved) and the three Czechian conferences were united into the Bohemian-Moravian Conference, which was detached from the division.¹⁵ Shortly after the war, in about 1946, the pre-war Czechian church units were restored, but as part of the Southern European Division.¹⁶ Three Czechian conferences turned out to be too many, so a year later they were reorganized into the Bohemian and Moravia-Silesian Conferences.¹⁷

In 1951 the Czechoslovakian government dissolved the conferences, and from 1952 to 1956 it stopped all public work of the Adventist Church and closed its churches. In 1956 the churches opened again, but it was only in 1968 that the three conferences—the Bohemian, Moravia-Silesian, and the Slovakian—were reorganized. They remain the church units of the union to this day.¹⁸

In 1971 the Central European and Southern European Divisions merged and the Czechoslovakian Union became part of the Euro-Africa Division.¹⁹

In 1993, when Czechoslovakia divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the union was renamed the Czechoslovakian Union.²⁰

The union headquarters was relocated many times. In 1923 the headquarters moved to Wilsonova 8, Königsfeld, Brno.²¹ A year later it went back to Troppau, at the new address Badergasse 12,²² and in 1929 it moved to Střední ul. 10, Brno.²³ In 1936 the headquarters moved to Prague, at Prague 11 (Žižkov), Dvořákova 29.²⁴ The headquarters has remained in the city ever since, at various addresses. In 1939 it moved to Praha-Vinohrady, Londýnská 35.²⁵ During World War II there was no union headquarters. The headquarters of the detached Bohemian-Moravian Conference was located at the same address, listed with its German name as Kgl. Weinberge, Münchenerstraße 35. The union headquarters was reestablished at Londýnská 30 in 1946.²⁶ In 1978 it moved to Zálesí 50, 147 00 Praha 4-Lhotka and returned to Londýnská 30; 120 00 Praha 2-Vinohrady in 2010.²⁷

In general, the union grew in membership throughout the twentieth century until it plateaued close to 10,000, and membership has been close to that number since at least the 1990s.²⁸

Institutions

The union ran “a training school for evangelistic workers in Lodenice, near Prague . . . from 1925 until World War II.”²⁹ The school was briefly reopened after the war as the Czechoslovakian Bible Seminary (1947-1955, according to the *SDA Yearbook*), but was shut down by the government. The school opened again in 1968 as the Czechoslovakian Bible Seminary.³⁰ After 1973 it was “only a correspondence school.” In 1990 it became the Adventist Bible Seminary

(Teologický seminář CASD, at Sázava). It closed in the mid-2010s.

In the late 1920s, the Czecho-Slovakian Publishing House was opened at Kralovo Pole, Wilsonova 8, Brno 12³¹ "Before World War II, the church was forced to close it" and it did not reopen until 1968³² After the fall of Communism in 1990 and the separation of the two republics in 1993, the publishing house was reorganized, renamed Advent-Orion, and divided into two country branches.³³

After four years of building, the Moravia-Silesian Conference opened a nursing home in Zlín in 1994. In 2007 the home became the Old People's Home Efata (*Domov pro seniory Efata*) with a capacity of 19 beds.³⁴

In 1995 Adventist World Radio–Czech Republic started³⁵ and in 2010 Hope Channel opened a branch in the Czech Republic.³⁶

Executive Officers Chronology

Presidents: Emil E. Frauchiger (1919-1923);³⁷ Richard Rühling (1924-1930); Michael H. Wentland³⁸ (1930-1935); J. Doubravský (1936-1952); T. J. Zigmund (1953-1963); Oldřich Sladek (1964-1989); Jiri Vesely (1990); Karel Nowak (1991-2004); Pavel Šimek (2005-2009); Mikuláš Pavlík (2010-present).

Secretaries: A. Gomola (1919-1922);³⁹ J. Schor (1923); W. Kudelka (1924-1926); O. Sedláček (1927-1928); J. Hrzebawetzky, secretary-treasurer (1929-1932); Josef Cepl, secretary-treasurer (1933-1945); O. Wagenknecht, secretary-treasurer (1946-1952); unknown 1953-1958; Jan Kantor (1959-1960); unknown (1961); Hvezdoslav Petr (1962-1969); Jan Kaba (1970-1981); Vladimír Kohut (1982-1990); Karel Strouhal (1991-1995); Miroslav Kysilko (1996-2004); Josef Hrdinka (2005-2009); Peter Šík (2010-present).

Treasurers: Fr. Ludwig (1919-1921);⁴⁰ Augusta Reckziegel (1922-1928); J. Hrzebawetzky, secretary-treasurer (1929-1932); Josef Cepl, secretary-treasurer (1933-1945); O. Wagenknecht, secretary-treasurer (1946-1952); unknown (1953-1958); Václav Kysilko (1959-1975); Pavel Kubečka (1976-1990); Vladimír Adame (1991-1999); Edvard Miskej (2000-2014); Marek Skrla (2015-).

SOURCES

"Annual Charts and Statistics" for the Czechoslovakian/Czechoslovakian Union Conference. Office of Archives, Statistics and Research. Accessed June 3, 2019. <http://adventiststatistics.org/>.

"Bekanntmachung für die Tschechoslowakische Union." *Zions-Wächter*, June 15, 1923.

"Domov pro seniory EFATA." Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://mss.casd.cz/domov-efata/>.

Frauchiger, Emil E. "Report of the Czechoslovakian Union Conference." *General Conference Bulletin*, May 28, 1922.

Geraty, T. S. "All-European Educational Council Held in Germany." *ARH*, September 19, 1968.

"In Brief." *ARH*, August 22, 1968.

Rühling, Richard. "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn." *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919.

Schuberth, H. F. "From the Central European Division." *ARH*, January 3, 1929.

Steele, Andrea. "Adventist Radio Extends Broadcast to Unreached Areas." *ARH*, March 3, 1994.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1918-2018.

NOTES

1. "The Yearbook uses the country names as listed in the United Nations Statistics Division Standard Country M49 Standard list. The United Nations has adopted Czechia as the name for the Czech Republic, so Czechia is being used in the appropriate Territory descriptions. For the time being the Czech Republic is used in all addresses." Year Book Home Page, "Czecho-Slovakian Union," accessed December 2, 2019, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=13774>?
2. The organization of the union is neither mentioned in the extant General Conference minutes nor in the *General Conference Bulletin*?
3. Richard Rühling, "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn," *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919, 236; Emil E. Frauchiger, "Report of the Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *General Conference Bulletin*, May 28, 1922, 304.?
4. In the *SDA Yearbook* of 1920-1921, the Moravia-Silesian Conference is called "West Silesian and Moravia Conference."?
- 5.

Richard Rühling, "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn," *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919, 236, 238. According to Rühling, there were two church units extant before the organization of the union: the Bohemian and the Moravia-Silesian Conferences. However, if there was a Bohemian Conference, it is not found in the reports. The Bohemian Mission is reported in all the quarterly reports of the Central European Union in 1918. In 1919, no Czechian church units are listed. The first report of the Czechoslovakian Union, the fourth quarter of 1919, lists the Bohemian Mission still. The first quarter report of 1920 then lists the five church units.?

6. Richard Rühling, "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn," *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919, 236. Czechoslovakia and Poland argued over and adjusted their border several times from 1920 to 1924. This accounts for the open territorial description.?
7. Emil E. Frauchiger, "Report of the Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *General Conference Bulletin*, May 28, 1922, 304.?
8. "Other European Union Conferences," *SDA Yearbook* (1920), 136.?
9. Richard Rühling, "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn," *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919, 236.?
10. "East Silesia Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1921), 100.?
11. Emil E. Frauchiger, "Report of the Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *General Conference Bulletin*, May 28, 1922, 304.?
12. H. F. Schubert, "From the Central European Division," *ARH*, January 3, 1929, 14; "Central European Division" and "Central Bohemian Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1930), 132, 136;?
13. "Central Bohemian Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1931), 139.?
14. The Slovakian Conference appears for the first time in the *Statistical Report* in 1939 and in the *SDA Yearbook* in 1941. *Statistical Report* (1939), 8; "Slovakian Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1941), 98.?
15. "Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1939), 95-96.?
16. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1946), 211-212.?
17. "Bohemia Conference" and "Moravia-Silesian Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1947), 196.?
18. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), s.v. "Czech Republic."?
19. "Euro-Africa Division," *SDA Yearbook* (1972), 124-125.?
20. "Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1994), 81.?
21. "Bekanntmachung für die Tschechoslowakische Union," *Zions-Wächter*, June 15, 1923, 190; "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1923), 90.?
22. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1924), 92.?
23. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1929), 118.?
24. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1936), 82.?
25. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1939), 95.?
26. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1946), 211.?
27. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1978), 147; "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *Yearbook* (2010), 70.?
28. "Annual Charts and Statistics" for the Czechoslovakian/Czechoslovakian Union Conference, Office of Archives, Statistics and Research, from the periods 1945-1969, http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=104901, 1959-1968, http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=107313, 1972-1992, http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=107311, 1993-present, http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=107312, all accessed June 3, 2019.?
29. The information for this institution is culled from the older encyclopedia. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), s.v. "Adventist Bible Seminary."?
30. "In Brief," *ARH*, August 22, 1968, 24; T. S. Geraty, "All-European Educational Council Held in Germany," *ARH*, September 19, 1968, 17-18.?
31. "Czechoslovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1927), 110.?
32. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), s.v. "Czecho-Slovakian Publishing House."?

33. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), s.v. "Czecho-Slovakian Publishing House."?
34. "Domov pro seniory EFATA," <http://mss.casd.cz/domov-efata/>, accessed May 20, 2019.?
35. "Institutions Located in the Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference," *SDA Yearbook* (1995), 83.?
36. Andrea Steele, "Adventist Radio Extends Broadcast to Unreached Areas," *ARH*, March 3, 1994, 28-29.?
37. Richard Rühling, "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn," *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919, 236.?
38. M. Hartmann, "Konferenzbericht der Nordböhmischen Vereinigung," *Zions-Wächter*, January 1, 1930, 7.?
39. Richard Rühling, "Die Abteilungskonferenz in Brünn," *Zions-Wächter*, December 17, 1919, 236.?
40. *Ibid.*?

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000