

# MEN OF OCTOBER 1918

Institute of Czech History, Charles University (Prague)

Co-organizers: Masaryk Institute and  
Archive of the Academy of Sciences  
CR, v. v. i.; History Institute of the  
Academy of Sciences CR, v. v. i.;  
CEVRO Institute (Prague)

Date: 23 and 24 October 2008.

Deadline for submitting applications:  
End of April 2008.

Interested scholars are invited to send their written or electronic applications for the conference, including the topic of the paper. Oral contributions are limited to 15 minutes. Organizers reserve the right to make the selection of registered applications for the final program as well as contributions for publication. The written version for the volume of contributions should be sent to the address below by the end of November 2008. The organizers regret that they cannot provide an accommodation for participants.

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For the application form please visit  
<http://www.mua.cas.cz>.

On the occasion of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, four academic institutes are planning an international conference *Men of October 1918*, which will explore in an innovative way the renewal of modern Czech statehood and its actors.

The conference will focus on personalities, who participated at the foundation of a new Czechoslovak state, its political, military, legal, social parts of its system, among others. It will also focus on those representatives of various groups opposing the foundation of a new state (at least in the form in which it was being established). The organizers expect that interpretations of activities of discussed representatives of Czech and Slovak politics in the period of transformation will combine biographical aspects with contemporary ideologies, political culture, political, constitutional and state-forming theories and concepts, developmental, and other alternative approaches. Since the activities of exile resistance representatives have so far received no small attention in historiography, the organizers are not concerned about topics related to these issues.

The following topics are suggested as priorities:

- a) The five men of October, who took part in the proclamation of an independent Czechoslovakia, in the formation of its initial constitution, transfer of powers, formation of new power centers, in the struggle for preservation of integrity of historical territory of the Czech state, including Slovak component, in construction of new rule mechanisms and legal framework, as well as in dealing with social and nationality unrest. One of the major assumptions is that the investigation of the roles of A. Švehla, F. Soukupa, A. Rašína, J. Stříbrného and V. Šrobára will expose issues connected with the destruction and formation of modern states, with the transformation of executive power, formation of administrative and legal system, changes in roles of political elites and their political and social responsibilities. Insight into these personalities will also assist to understanding the occurrence, development and functioning of new, exceptional, and non-standard organs, their nature and forms as the reflection of »revolutionary atmosphere« and »revolutionary methods« for solving problems of the day. On the basis of decision making of a number of specific persons, the issues of continuity and discontinuity related to power and rule, political legitimacy, representation, etc. can be investigated.
- b) Contributions related to other important political and public figures of the period, who were in close relation to above mentioned personalities in Czech Lands and Slovakia, can be similarly framed. Their selection does not have to come from the political sphere, their connection can come from other important sectors such as economy, financial corporations, and culture, which naturally tied with public sphere.
- c) Personalities from the opposite camp, especially the activist representatives of Czech political parties, who remained without political influence because of their more or less pro-Austrian stand (e.g. B. Šmeral, Z. V. Tobolka, J. Fořt, J. G. Maštalčka), the representatives of Catholic political orientations, and the representatives of national minorities of the new state (e.g. J. Selinger, R. Lodgman v. Auen aj.).
- d) We consider important that some biographical reflections are related to specific social groups tied to the old state, such as representatives of the aristocracy, Austro-Hungarian military, Catholic clergy, and Austrian state administration, since they were exposed to certain instability due to the establishment of Czechoslovakia and the deconstruction of her monarchic predecessor. The possible new insights could uncover shared destiny of such personalities as, e.g. the last Governors of Bohemia and Moravia, heads of state police, military administration, etc.

We believe that prevalingly biographies oriented conference will provide sufficient possibilities for more general perceptions of the developments in 1918 and that it will bring about new insights and interpretations of issues frequently discussed and seemingly resolved.