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Report on the Visit of Prof. and Mrs. Josef Hromádka to the U.S.A., 1966

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DOCUMENT

Editor's note: Professor Josef L. Hromádka (referred to as JLH in the report) was a theologian of the Church of the Czech Brethren who took refuge in the USA during the Nazi conquest of his native Czechoslovakia and taught at Princeton Theological Seminary. He made what for many seemed a surprising decision to return to Prague after the communist coup d'état in 1948. Soon he became the best known Protestant theologian on the other side of the "Iron Curtain" as he interpreted communism as a wave of a promising future to which Christians need to adjust in order to assist in the humanization of the revolution. This got him into severe conflict with most Western church leaders and theologians, particularly with John Foster Dulles at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. Nevertheless many Western theologians fundamentally trusted that he did not betray Christian principles and were willing to dialogue with him in order to prevent the total separation of Christians into two hostile blocs. Late in 1966 Prof Hromádka and his wife were guests in the USA to meet the foremost Main Line Christian leaders. They were accompanied by John Heidbrink who was a Presbyterian minister and worked as Secretary for Church Relations for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and was an activist for civil rights and peace. The report was written and disseminated shortly after the trip and was faithfully retyped to be used in OPREE as a document of its time.

REPORT ON THE VISIT OF Prof. AND MRS. JOSEF HROMADKA TO THE U.S.A. October 29 – December 20, 1966

(Dictated: please excuse the awkward phraseology.)

Preface

Needless to say, the arrangements for the visit of Josef L. Hromadka represent the efforts of many people. The work of Charles West and Vernon Ferwerda in making the contacts and overcoming the hurdles of the State Department as well as getting the support of Princeton Seminary and its alumni was required. Special efforts by John Bennett, James McCord and

Edwin Espy, through the letters they wrote to the Department of State, cleared many hurdles. The willingness of JLH to consider such an exhausting trip represents the stamina of this mysterious life which seems to fortify itself through the situations in which it lives. The great help of Paul Peachey in carrying through the details during my absence in October as well as the yeoman service rendered by Chris Schmauch during the New York-New Jersey stay of the Hromadkas needs special commendation. Kurtis Naylor and his good secretary provided a number of salvation schemes which baled us out of a number of tight situations. Their equanimities and good graces require honorable mention. Likewise let me mention, now that I am no longer part of its forces, the Fellowship of Reconciliation which provided time and money in following through on this project by making me available in a number of capacities.

I – Itinerary Schedule

October 29 – November 6	Princeton, N.J.
November 6 – November 16	New York City
November 16 – November 21	Boston, Mass
November 21 – November 27	Washington, D.C.
November 27 – November 29	Dubuque, Iowa
November 30 – December 1	Minneapolis, Minn.
December 1 – December 3	Pittsburgh, Penna.
December 4 – December 6	Atlanta, Georgia
December 7 – December 9	Chicago, Ill.
December 10 – December 12	Claremont, Calif.
December 13 – December 15	Santa Barbara, Calif.
December 16 – December 20	Toronto, Canada

Commentaries

Let me make some comment on the various visitations as per my own observations as well as the word of others who were present when I was not.

Apparently the Princeton visit was one of high sentiment and warm recollection as JLH relived and remembered the past through contacts, associations, walks, etc. The hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. James McCord was especially noteworthy in the fact that they turned over their home and gave many hours of helpful service in making the JLH stay in Princeton secure by a base of operations. JLH had a number of informal sessions with his old students who had come from

many states, as well as friends of the faculties of the various colleges. He especially mentioned the service of worship in the church which they attended regularly in the past. Endless dinners and teas as well as luncheons with old and new friends made this week one of special memory for the Hromadkas the rest of their lives. They sensed a genuine reaction to their presence as well as some restrained curiosity about their vocations in Czechoslovakia. But Princeton was a homecoming and the community did not spare the graces and the good manners for which it is known. Hromadka had a chance to address a class or two as well as many conversations with students and faculty. Apart from a fainting spell which was due partly to exhaustion from the plane flights, his stamina held up and he carried through with an original program set up by Dr. McCord. A number of Czech families and friends from the area spent time with them. In fact, their contacts in Princeton produced contacts in areas throughout their trip as we visited towns and cities. We were always having to set up this or that appointment and to see or meet someone who had been suggested to them by their Princeton people.

The New York City stay was perhaps the least rewarding of their trip for a number of reasons. New York City is a cold and inhospitable place because of the rush, bother and endless visitations by people from across the world. Everything seemed rather official and somewhat forced, with too brief a time spent with people and situations which Hromadka felt deserved greater attention. The New York stay, while glittering and glamorous from many points of view, produced for him less assurance by raising questions of who are we and who are they. Visits and programs were full of great coverage but superficial in terms of time and atmosphere. But he said he would carry on what was begun in New York by correspondence. Of course, his contacts at Union through John Bennett, visits with Paul Lehmann and talks with Roger Shinn stood out as very important. I judge the importance of these various items in how he commented on them and how he referred to them. The meeting with the Metropolitan John was somewhat cramped by the inclusion of perhaps the one undesirable¹ whom Hromadka found almost uncopable, but he did make efforts to deal with this fact and on at least two occasions felt rather intimidated by the whole background of it and admitted the problem that he was having in adjusting to it. I chided him about it and asked him his old bit about reconciliation and the enemy and he laughingly indicated that it was quite true: he himself must learn to swallow and bear up. I told him I

¹ Editor's note: The person was most likely Rev. Blahoslav Hruby, a Czech refugee pastor who was a prominent anti-communist. He was for many years the editor of *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*

thought he was exaggerating the significance of the presence of this undesirable, but he assured me that it was a terribly serious matter in terms of history and problems created by this person. He found constantly throughout the trip the need to undo or at least ramify seeds of error and venom which had been sown. But the human experience, coupled with a number of informal gatherings, redeemed the New York situation from being one of disappointment. He mentioned a rather important remark that Robert Bilheimer made during the evening session with the National Council of Churches staff. This remark of Mr. Bilheimer stood out as one of pressing consideration at least on the part of what it offered to the CPC² as a summons, namely, on the question of United States involvement in Vietnam, "What can you do to help us?" This haunted JLH throughout the entire trip and will, I feel certain, somewhat alter the present mood and immediate history of the attitudes present within the CPC. At this point I should mention that one of the more concrete contributions to Hromadka's understanding of the American church and the country as a whole, which came from an unconscionable number of exchanges at nearly all levels of life, is the discovery that much more effort was made than he figured by people and groups to protest and question United States involvement in Vietnam. He was not prepared for the pervasive mood of discontent and protest which he found nearly everywhere he went. Some of it was inane and ineffective protest; much of it was thoughtful and history-oriented; nearly all of it was bold and feverish. It should be mentioned that the Hromadkas sensed, perhaps for the first time, the degree and quality of self-criticism and world perspective which they found in various areas of the church's life as well as outside it in a way they thought did not exist. If it did exist already in their minds, it did not have the character or quality of analysis or depth of world view which they found. He oftentimes raised the question of whether or not he was being directed primarily to the more dynamic centers of national life. I assured him that we with carefulness tried to include regional areas which would produce for him the diversity and various qualities of life and mood which the complexity of the country provides. All told, some of his discoveries and the depth of commitment experienced shocked him considerably and left him almost speechless at times. By diversity I mean people speaking out of academic administration, teaching, in colleges, high schools and private schools, leaders of the women's forces in the church and outside it, American businessmen, old and young, people working in high and middle

² CPC is an abbreviation for the Christian Peace Conference organized in Prague of which Hromádka was the president until shortly after the Soviet invasion in 1968.

areas of government, municipal as well as federal, loners and mavericks who with starchy words wrote their names with fire, and simple people with no opinion who were somewhat wandering with shock and mystification of the upheaval of time and the movements of history which this century has produced and is producing. The visit with Prof. Niebuhr was especially meaningful as he measured this venerable gentleman's insights and retrospections. At the very end of their afternoon walk along the Hudson River, they shook hands and in a moment of great tenderness bid farewell.

Boston – The Boston visit centered around a day-long conference on the ethics of revolution which Hromadka shared with Professors Muelder, Joseph Fletcher, Leslie Dewart, and a very exciting young Methodist missionary just returned from Brazil, now teaching Political Science on Long Island, by the name of Grady (?). I was amazed by the extent and tribute paid by academicians like Leslie Dewart who clearly made a point of admitting the enormous debt owed Hromadka by all those working now on the meaning of the secular and the undiscovered values of a misunderstood Marxism. Joseph Fletcher took real issue with Hromadka on JHL's interpretation of revolution as still originating in class struggles. Fletcher took him to hard task for this cliché and in the end Hromadka somewhat altered his definition of revolution to include technology, etc. He began substituting the words tension, conflict and crisis as a result of some rather concrete lessons learned in semantics and history from this day-long catharsis in Boston. Jim Farmer, formerly of CORE, also participated in this meeting. There was a good gathering of seminarians, parish people, etc. The Hromadkas were entertained and generally looked after, as I was, by Prof. and Mrs. Paul Deats who arranged a dinner with the Muelders and Prof. Harold Berman of the Law School. Berman was for two years in the Soviet Union studying Soviet Law and practices and has written knowledgeably about developments in Soviet legal philosophy. Hromadka addressed the Boston University Chapel, primarily the seminary community, in one of his best concoctions of history, theology, sociology and references to Slavic literature. The unsystemization, which has always been a good criticism of Hromadka, was laid bare a number of times on this trip, but the baring revealed the harmony of the disharmonious and the logic of the discontinuous. He is almost a classical fragmentist as he pieces together terribly impressive fabrics of essential information rooted in unmistakable autobiography. Self criticisms and general humor about self and those movements with which he has become synonymous border on the hysterical at times. Talks in the Harvard Divinity School, moderated by Harvey Cox,

lunch with the Harvard Divinity School faculty where he met the young Niebuhr and others, filled him with great pride. He had a visit with Pres. Pusey and spent a luncheon period with Dr. and Mrs. Paul Dudley White, Eisenhower's heart specialist, who was intimately acquainted with Prof. Lukl, also a noted international heart specialist in Prague, who by chance is the brother of Mrs. Hromadka. Talks at Andover Newton Theological School and a visit to the Episcopal Theological School (a private talk with Dean Coburn) and finally, a supper meeting with friends of the CPC filled out the Boston engagement. (Methodist Bishop Matthews, the Homer Jacks, the Robert Nelsons, the Myron Bloys, Theodore Parker Ferris, and others).

It goes without saying that the Boston schedule was the most substantial of them all. It represented unbelievable planning and clockwork precision in bringing it off and, strange to admit, an uncommon amount of time for rest and contemplation. The Hromadkas were not used to such a world of activity and experiences; consequently, the lack of time to contemplate and put these experiences in perspective bothered them enormously. I found myself staying up with them past midnight, just living through and deciphering events, circumstances, and terminology which had accumulated during the day. They read avidly each day two sets of newspapers—the *New York Times* plus the local papers. He clipped until I thought for sure he would go down as a sinking ship with such a pile of stuff increasing daily. This, plus books, pamphlets, someone's essay or someone's book, which they wanted him to have, accumulated into a 62 lb. package of stuff which has been sent to Prague. Happily, the Center in Santa Barbara met the cost of mailing to him in Prague everything which had come out of his work there.

I have failed to mention before, a preaching service JHL led in the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul. Dean Charles Buck had the JHL's for lunch afterwards for further discussions with the Joseph Fletchers.

Washington, D.C. was primarily a private visit for the JLH's. The John Mackays have always been intimate friends. Dr. Mackay arranged for the H's to stay at David House as his guest. Vernon Ferwerda and Paul Peachey worked out and carried through the sort of easy time which the H's needed after Boston. This included a talk at Wesley Seminary, visits with Dudley Ward, Nathanael Davis, former U.S. Minister to Bulgaria and friends of the H's. Davis is now, I believe, a part of the White House staff in some capacity. The H's, with the Mackays and Peachey, visited the Czech ambassador. Representative Jed Johnson, Democrat from Oklahoma who just lost his Congressional seat, made possible a tour of some of the capitol. Johnson utterly

charmed the H's by his humor and folksy commentary. This young man was once one of the leaders of the National Students Association. His insights were invaluable. The Hromadkas also, at their request, were taken to the gravesite of John Kennedy as well as the grave of Woodrow Wilson in the National Cathedral. All of this along with Thanksgiving Day spent with the John Mackays in quiet seclusion made the Washington visit especially meaningful. Paul Peachey and Vernon Ferwerda, according to the JLH's, made the H's feel at home and provided them with just what they wanted and needed.

I met the H's at the Baltimore airport on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Together we travelled to Dubuque via Chicago. Such a day. Our tickets were incorrect in that our reservations were for different days. This had us on standby in Chicago. However, we made it through to Dubuque and were met in Davenport by Professor Arthur Cochran of Dubuque Seminary. One must admit that Dubuque was, before we arrived there, merely a low reference point as some sort of regional prep school for the ministry which the United Presbyterians maintained for conscience sake. Quite the contrary. Our snobbishness took a terrible beating. Cochran was the perfect man for us in that he knew intimately much of the Hromadka past and demonstrated a working knowledge of continental European theological development which made our discussions in the seminary and college some of the best we experienced during the entire trip. Calvin Schnucker, the dean of the seminary, apparently has made possible a steady flow of various people from across the world coming and going to and from Dubuque seminary. Professor Barth had been there as well as others. The seminarians were unbelievably open and vitally interested in the entire historical background out of which Hromadka speaks. At Dubuque we heard the question: "How does one born as a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire adjust to the radical winds of change represented by the Czech struggles of the 20's, 30's, 40's, and 50's? How, Professor Hromadka, have you looked upon and understood the changes in your own faith and life from the schoolhouse to the Comenius Faculty?" At Dubuque we were a part of the Lutheran Seminary life for one day as well as some time spent with the Dominican Priory where Hromadka was asked to join in delivering the elements of the Holy Communion to the priest as they were taken from the back of the church to the altar. This was the first time that Hromadka had been so intimately involved in a Roman Catholic liturgy; and the first time he had heard the Mass completely in the vernacular. At Dubuque the JLH's spent an evening in a Coffee House sponsored by the seminary and run by seminarians and their wives. Hromadka spoke informally

while sitting around, as he put it, “as though we were neither drinkers or waiters but waiting for something to happen.” In the Coffee House he got the hardest questions in terms of reactionary feelings: how can you live with infidels?; how can you sleep at night knowing you are alive and others are dead because of your lack of resistance; do you still believe that you did the wisest thing in working out an alliance with the communists? All of this sort of thing is real challenge for JLH. He rises to it with horn and shield and leaves the questioner in one piece in the end but with a puzzle to rework according to some new pieces rather than a distorted game of chance to play with no ground rules and purpose. I never once saw a hard-nose critic turn mad or muster one whit of resentment after Hromadka dealt with loaded and harsh questions. And we had numerous hot occasions. In Boston, after the preaching service at the Episcopal cathedral of St. Paul where Hromadka outdid himself in a 20 minute sermon of such beauty and artful restraint (*Ecce Homo* as Pilate addressed Jesus and the throng) the place melted afterwards as people poured to him like magnetized elements we were met afterwards at the door of the cathedral by a group of Czech immigrants who shouted and accused like dislocated children. Hromadka just goes to them and places his hand on their shoulders and asks: “Brother, what’s the matter? What do you seek?” In Chicago at McCormick Seminary a Hungarian pastor who fled at the time of the 1956 revolt literally rethought his hard questions after Hromadka dealt with the emotions behind the questions first, then the question. In all situations Hromadka made a point of emphasizing that we need to criticize one another and he above others needed it the most. It was because of this need to have the views and appraisals of others that he wanted so much to come to America this time. He urged and sought the questions and doubts of others. He indicated that he now felt he and others had made many mistakes but they were honest ones and must be seen within the context of a time fraught with fire and acids as people were unprepared for the radical demands of the times. At no time did Hromadka defend himself outright by exhibiting a defensive collection of egocentric values. He always allowed for the possible accuracy of the question or criticism in the long run. But he also said that we all would have to wait and see.

From Dubuque we took a delightful afternoon trip by railroad to Minneapolis where the next morning JLH spoke first to a student gathering at breakfast and later to a meeting of clergy and faculty from the area. David Reid, pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York, was chapel speaker and was present with us for the rest of the day. His good spirit and rather unexpected mood curiosity contributed a lot to the day. We were picketed by the

Schwartz Anti-Communist Crusade people twice during the day, during which they distributed a wild brand of comic books which sought to tell their message. Hromadka went wild trying to collect them all and genuinely poured over each one like someone looking for a new cure for cancer. In Minneapolis we met the nephew of Camilio Torres, the murdered Columbian priest whose decision to fight alongside the Communists cost him his life, but who now has become or is becoming a living symbol of costly and priceless resistance amongst radical Catholic forces in South America.

We arrived in Pittsburg late and were met by Dietrich Ritschl. The H's were taken directly to the home of Professor and Mrs. Markus Barth, where a seminar on New Testament exegesis was underway. Hromadka participated as well as visiting with Prof. Barth who was leaving the next day for Texas. The next morning the Pittsburg Seminary chapel speaker was Senator Wayne Morse, who delivered a precise and heated address on the dangers of Executive Supremacy and to what extent the Vietnam war was providing this tendency in government with weapons which go undetected and possibly entrenched for another generation to root out. It was a flaming occasion with the seminary community rising in a body to salute the man and the thesis. The JLH's were quite moved. President Miller invited the JLH's to his office later for talks with Morse, with Hromadka inviting him to Prague. The senator was quite interested and plans seem underway. The seminary set up a number of events for the Hromadkas: lectures, chapel, seminars, private time with interested students, visits with faculty, social occasions with the Millers and Ritschls. It should be said that Dietrich Ritschl and his wife provided every amount of care and help to make this stay relaxed and intimate to a remarkable degree. We saw the film, *Dr. Zhivago*, which stimulated an entire evening of discussion and debate: whether or not the background of the Russian revolution was understood by the film people; and were the hard contradictions involved in any revolution clearly stated, or were they implied only subtly in some of the remarks of the characters? But it was a beautiful film a part from some problems. Earlier in Dubuque we had seen *The Sound of Music*, which added to the pleasure and education of us all. In Boston we had been able to see *The Man From La Mancha*, a wily film which sets against the classical material of Don Quixote, the life of Cervantes, and all via the medium of an American musical. Hromadka and I one evening, one of the few not utilized by some local impresario, saw *The Shameless Old Lady*. In Boston we went quite late one evening to see the deMille filming of *The Ten Commandments*, which had us roaring and awed all at the same time.

The JLH's were speechless with what appeared to be a combination of child-like wonder and intellectual nausea. It was a good experience. In Claremont we attended a perfectly fantastic student's choral Christmas programme. The pieces were sublime and beautifully sung. Half way in the concert, and during the singing of a William Byrd canticle, various colored small lights began to flicker on and off in the beard of one of the student singers. Everyone collapsed. He did it the second time and on his way out during a high and mighty processional. Needless to say, it was one of the most shockingly funny moments any of us had experienced. But it appears that some kooky thing like this occurs every year. But the Hromadkas were mystified by it all. And William Byrd was gutted.

We left Pittsburg for Atlanta on a plane full of NCC³ people heading for Miami. General greeting and solicitations were exchanged back and forth during the entire hour's flight. In Atlanta we stayed at the Quaker House which John and June Yungblut run with amazing effectiveness as a point in Atlanta where the negro and white communities meet and work together. Our schedule in Atlanta was drowned by the effects of attending the Ebenezer Baptist Church where Martin King Sr. and Jr. hold forth on alternate Sundays. We hit it right for the Martin Jr. Mrs, Hromadka attended the three-hour long service with me since JLH preached twice in the big Episcopal church. H joined us for the last part of the Ebenezer service and for a good meeting with Martin Jr. afterwards. Well.... the service was something: hour long sermon, ten hymns, three collections, and rapid-reading singing by a choir right out of Green Pastures. Old "amens" and other asides from old church people, the cold detachment of the younger people during all of these quaint practices, the way Martin Jr. has to handle his father who always wants to take over, the well-heeled congregation, Martin Jr.'s eloquence and depth in the face of all of this old churchly dazzle, well, it was something. Afterwards King, Jr. gave us his time and effort as he reviewed the factors which have molded the Freedom Movement and some of its problems. He indicated he wanted very much to come to Prague and asked that we here keep after him. The Hromadkas were speechless as though they had touched the hem of the Lord's garment. We met Andy Young, had long and touching moments with Tom Altizer who came to the three Hromadka lectures, perhaps his best during the entire time I heard him, given in Emory University on the Varieties and Qualities of Atheism. His use of literary sources, to say the least, made these lectures almost a new experience for me. He used a different language and

³ National Council of Churches.

utilized a preciseness not always found in his address. Richard Hocking, the son of old William Ernest Hocking, was very pleased and will have the tapes edited and summarized, I believe. The JLH's spoke before the Federated Negro Theological Faculty as well as Columbia Presbyterian Theological Seminary, one of the most elegant and richly appointed places we visited. The president, an old friend of JLH, was a typical southern gentleman and with it went the strange fragrance of irrelevance which one sensed about the whole place. One seldom runs into such glaring biblical myopia as we found there. But politeness and southern gentility guarded every moment. JLH spoke to many foreign students in groups as well as individually and took one of his roughest beatings from an Indian Sikh, who literally trounced JLH on the subject of revolution and Christian responsibility. I noticed after this experience that JLH always made some reference to the Sikh's point of view when he discussed revolution after Atlanta. With a twinkle he always would say "as I learned and possibly should have known". Little situations like this came up time and again and always the good man sincerely made the best possible use of what might have staggered or maddened others. His humility is unbelievable. In fact, nothing explains the beauty of the man more than an integrated open-ended self. His self, if one can say so, is incomplete to the extent that its openness is always extended to others. Thus the always open mind and heart.

We left Atlanta for Chicago where President Arthur McKay, McCormick's president, arranged everything. We stayed at this enormous Seminary and received polite but guarded reception at all times. Thom Hunter was perhaps the most open and solicitous. Floyd Filson was kind and helpful. But we had only one event at McCormick except a small faculty luncheon. However the evening set aside for student and community use was huge in attendance. We went to visit Dr. Alice Masaryk, the elderly daughter of the former president of the Czech Republic. But she had died the week before after receiving word that the JLH's wanted to see her and after sending word to Washington that she would be delighted. The JLH's wanted to see where she was buried. This had us visiting the Masaryk Memorial, a large Czech burial ground. One of the funniest yet impertinent moments came when we arrived at the cemetery and asked the office if we could be shown to the burial spot of Alice Masaryk, whereupon the attendant places the urn with the ashes of Miss Masaryk inside it in front of us. We were shattered. The JLH's turned white but we all burst into wild laughter as soon as we left the cemetery office. But we spent one hour examining all of the thousand of Czech tombs and graves. JLH knew many of the origins

and centers of these departed citizens of Czechoslovakia. He spent a long time speaking about the motives and problems of Czech migration down through the years. He spoke about his own problems of settlement and the temptations and family demands for settlement in the USA. The next day we finished our rather uneventful Chicago stay by a lunch at Chicago Theological Seminary to which was invited the Divinity Faculty of Chicago University. JLH had great exchanges with Eberhard Bethge, Gibson Winter and others. It was a powerful meeting but entirely too short and cursory. I must mention our visit to the gymnasium of Northwestern University where the World Council of Churches met in 1956. JLH especially wanted to take Mrs. H there. We went in rather solemn fashion. He then explained his own reaction to this event and what was involved in it and the great heartache of it all.... for himself and Janos Peter. He also mentioned how Homer Jack, pastor of the Evanston big Unitarian Church at the time, asked him to preach in the middle of the furor. He said it should be known that many people were helpful and considerate at the time and no impression should be given that the area or everyone showed hostility. I was amazed at the inner temper of the situation which was far more human than many of us were led to believe from the outside at the time. But we walked through the gymnasium and he went to this place and that indicating who sat where and what occurred.

From Chicago we flew to Claremont via the Los Angeles airport. We were met by Pete Reckard of the Claremont colleges. The trip to this enchanted place was through the den of lights and scents which characterizes the area as a rather voluptuous place. The JLH's were like children. The hills and quaint houses of all sizes, the smell of orange trees blooming, hot pink automobiles whizzing by.... It all was rather interesting. The stay in Claremont was excellent. Academically JLH was sharp and precise covering many areas of history, ideology, biblical interpretation, the future of faith, his reaction to Leslie Dewart's new book on the future of faith, his reaction to the many reports coming from the visit of Roger Garaudy, the contact made by Temple University at the time Garaudy spoke there, all at the request of Garaudy, what the visit of Garaudy might mean for those in Europe who are struggling in this self-examination and Marxist challenge, what is meant by the various reports we were receiving by letter and phone call (one by Newsweek eventuated in a three hour interview by their senior editor who also interviewed me regarding the results of the JLH trip; the article will appear if the editor receives permission from the clearing house people at Newsweek) from people who were hearing Garaudy and his references to Hromadka. Hromadka preached in the chapel as well as numerous

faculty conferences in homes. He met Fred Warner Neal who squired him entirely too many places. Neal is heading up the Center for the Study of Democratic Institution's Geneva Conference in May on the *Pacem In Terris* Encyclical. It should be mentioned that the JLH's and the Matthew Spinkas, one of JLH's old friends who became one of his more acute critics, had a fine reunion and parted in better understanding than was had before they arrived. The Spinkas entertained the JLH's and were in attendance at two of the lectures.

In Los Angeles JLH spent part of an afternoon at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. This was arranged by the United Campus Christian group. In the evening JLH spoke at the Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church in Hollywood. We arrived here with fear and trembling because the church had advertised in the L.A. Times about the event. But it turned out well. We left following the service for Santa Barbara where the Center had reservations for us at a terribly grand hotel on the ocean with courtyard full of exotic plants, orange and lemon trees blooming and bearing all over the place. It was like a fairy tale. The next morning Hallock Hoffman, who is on the staff of the Center (the son of Paul Hoffman) came for us and eventually loaned us a car which we used for drives during our free time. The first session of the Center was set up around JLH. The group which was chaired by Robert Hutchins included W.H. Ferry, Stringfellow Barr, Scott Buchanan, Bishop Pike, Elizabeth Mann Borghese, the daughter of Thomas Mann, philosophers, economists, etc. All had read what we had sent of JLH's writings, more especially The Gospel For Atheists. The place crackled and rang with some of the deepest probing we had experienced by people who had done their homework. Ping Ferry placed a hot coal in the lap of JLH by asking him "after all of this elaboration, Prof. Hromadka, of what is found in your discussions with various groups of humanists in Europe, what, may I add, has been the effect on the church and more especially your own Christian Faith?" It was a marvelous question and turned JLH on with music and timbrel. The next two hours no one spoke except JLH who literally gave his life story ... guts and all. This occasion deserves great evaluation, and some sort of exact and analytical study ought to be made of its contents. I was told that only once before had the strict schedule of the Center in their conduct of these probings gone to hell and extended beyond the dignified hour of 12:30 pm. We were eating lunch at 2pm. Old Stringfellow Barr, a crusty old character out of Nathaniel Hawthorn said somewhat feverishly, "Well, Dr. Hromadka, I've seldom been enlightened and inspired at the same time, something which doesn't occur around here too often. What you have indicated of the importance of Thomas

Masaryk in the history of humanist enlightenment deserves a special hearing. Do come back soon.”

Hutchins invited JLH to be a major speaker at the Geneva Convocation on the *Pacem in Terris* encyclical in May. He has agreed to come. JLH also stimulated and summoned the Center to take more seriously the Marxist-Christian exchange and to provide an on-going base of operation for European-USA-Marxist-Christian funnelling. We left Santa Barbara after our last evening spent with Bill Stringfellow hashing over the Pike affair and what it is trying to say in a multitude of ways. Stringfellow is writing a book on the thing and is in Santa Barb. for interviews with Pike, who, by the way, seems to be delighting in the whole mess but for the wrong reasons, I suspect. He is a man of enormous pride and self-esteem with a flare for genuinely brilliant statement, at times, but who sense of timing is almost thespian.

We left the next morning for N.Y. We spent the five hours on the return just talking about the trip and what it means for all of us, Hromadkas included. He indicated a real opening for him as he began to rethink contacts and large and small occasions which had him strung, flexed, and diagnosed. He seemed to indicate that, and may I use only this one statement at the present time, he was not prepared for the America of his discovery during these weeks here. He was clear in saying that he was the most puzzled over the inability of the dynamic substance found in so many people and occasions (analysis, perception, historical orientation, etc.) to penetrate the centers of national life from which comes the essence of the corporate mien. He accused me of taking him only to the lively places and screwing him in and to controlled situations. But I believe he believes that what he saw and heard was cross-section but uneven, erratic, and often isolated and ingrown. He drifted back to what Wayne Morse was saying and explaining about Executive Supremacy and a benevolent oligarchy and the price our ideology was paying for insulated affluence which was robbing the electorate of its concerns and scrutinies. JLH felt that in the USA it was nip and tuck insofar as what would tip the balance in terms of future factors which would shape this country and the world. He does see that there is a powerful but ineffective world group at work here, a growing consensus of concerned and informed people who have the ability and facility to reach out and touch the world and all of its parts and thereby bring this to bear on a languishing society. We arrived in New York still fresh and untired, believe it or not. Margaret Flory and Margaret Shannon took the JLH's to a performance of the *Nutcracker* at Lincoln Center and a meal afterwards with Paul Lehmann. The next morning we

invited some of our Catholic friends and Christoph Schmauch in for a Communion Service around the table. This was our parting. Then Christoph took them to the aeroport for the trip to Toronto. Brewster Kneen in Toronto reported good meetings, many students, lots of clergymen. Leslie Dewart and JLH spoke together at length. The JLH's left for Prague on December 21. They cabled their arrival in Prague and how good it was to see the CPC staff at the aeroport. They unloaded their many gifts for Christmas with their two daughters and their families and have now retired to their cottage in Moravia for time to digest, write, report, and think about the whole experience. Their last words were thank yous to the CPC group here who made it all possible, certainly one of the lasting moments to be remembered in these the last years of their lives.

J. [John] Heidbrink

[end of the report]

Retyped by Kit Schmauch in July 2020

P. S. Christoph Schmauch, who provided OPREE with the typescript had received a hand-written note, dated Praha, January 8, 1967, which Josef Hromádka wrote to Christoph Schmauch:

"There is not one day we wouldn't think and speak of you and of your dear wife. You have been staying in our happy memory and our hearts have been warmed whenever we have recalled all the moments of your wonderful care for us. Our days in America are so closely connected with both of you that we even cannot imagine those days without visualizing you in our company. Nadia sends her hearty thanks to Mrs. Schmauch for her assistance and help at her shopping. -- Our daughter and grandchildren were delighted and thrilled by what she had helped to buy."