# Czechs Celebrate Liberation From Nazis

*(Mrs. Cyrus Eaton Sr. is accompanying her husband on a tour of Europe, both east and west of the Iron Curtain. She is reporting her observations exclusively for The Plain Dealer).*

By ANNE EATON

PRAGUE — The story here is the reunion of four of the five Soviet soldiers who manned the first tank into Prague in May, 1945. Tank 23, Prague's symbol of liberation, stands in its own small, flower-filled park on a stone base where bronze plaques record the names of Czech patriots who died in the last round with the Nazis. Wreaths and bouquets from people who remember cover it.

The parents of the fifth boy who was killed, and who is buried in Prague, are here with the four who are together for the first time in 20 years as guests of the Czechoslovakian government. They are the toast of the town. N. V. Podgorny, vice president of the U.S.S.R., brought them around to meet us at the president's reception at Prague Castle.

ANOTHER YOUNG Soviet celebrity here for the celebration at the 20th anniversary of the end of the war is Lt. Col. Alexei Leonov, the cosmonaut who stepped out into space. He looks like a blond Eagle Scout. When admirers crowded him back to an open window, his problem of escape was solved by the Canadian ambassador's suggestion that he could step out of the fourth floor window any time.

The 12th century, story-book Prague Castle is mammoth, elegantly white and gilt in endless series of reception rooms lit by crystal chandeliers, with huge tapestries, parquet floors, an art gallery and, for this emotion-filled occasion, a magnificent buffet, wines and all, for 2,000. The entire diplomatic corps was there, including a beautiful Chinese lady in long green brocade. Evening dresses were much in evidence; President Antonin Novotny's striking wife wore elegant powder blue lace.

In the midst of great gratitude to the Soviets who liberated Prague, the American armies that opened German concentration camps are no forgotten.

The minister of health, a 6 foot, strapping Catholic priest, leader of the People's party (not Communist) spent six years in Dachau and Buchenwald. Asked when he was freed, he answered promptly, "April 29, 1945, at 5:30 in the afternoon, by Patton's Third Army."

EVERY OTHER person here either was freed from a camp by Americans or has relatives in the United States, or both; so Czechoslovakia is particularly disturbed by "the change from Kennedy's policy," as they put it.

President Kennedy is truly mourned here; they feel that he believed in peace. They are perplexed that President Johnson's policy seems a repudiation of his campaign promises which were followed very closely here. The Pentagon gets the blame, though, not the President or the American people whose huge vote for Johnson they take as a vote for peace.

AT A SIX-COURSE state luncheon in an exquisite old palace, Foreign Minister Vaclav David expressed the hope that Czechoslovakia would soon have the same trade relations with the United States that it has with Canada and Great Britain. Although there is more U.S. trade in 1964 than in the last 15 years, it is still meager because of U.S. restrictions. Businessmen here hope for return to most favored nation treatment.

They mention (with great courtesy) that there now are

$20 million in New York banks which Czechoslovakia sent before Hitler invaded—for safekeeping.

A tripartite commission of England, France and the United States agrees that the funds should be returned but cannot agree to sign the agreement. It was suggested that if the United States can afford to spend $700 million in Viet Nam, it could perhaps return Czechoslovakia's $20 million which would, in turn, provide funds for more U. S. trade.

**Even without that nest egg, the country looks prosperous,** shop windows are smart, food is divine, hotel service is unexcelled anywhere.

**MR. AND MRS. MARSIK** of Cleveland are visiting the two agriculture experts who spent six months at Acadia Farms learning our methods of farming and breeding Shorthorn beef cattle.

Mr. Drejvany was one of the beaming guests at another elegant ceremony and reception when we were given gold medals for our continuing friendship for the people of Czechoslovakia. Others were the president of the Chamber of Commerce (recently in Cleveland with a trade delegation); President Sorm of the Academy of Sciences, a Pugwash scientist; former Ambassador to the United States and Mrs. Ruzek, and a crowd of friendly notables. (Mr. Eaton has a drawer full of medals at home; this is my first.)