

Letter to the Editor

As president of the Czech & Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota (CSCC) and on behalf of the organization's board of directors, I would like to respond to the 3/8/20 Pioneer Press article "MN Historical Society blacklists 11 groups over state-funded projects that never got off the ground". There were several misrepresentations about our project that I would like to clarify.

Contrary to the article, our project did "get off the ground". In 2006, the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) awarded the CSCC a \$1500 grant to interview a select sample of Czechoslovakians who fled their country during political turmoil of 1948 and, ultimately, became U.S. citizens. The CSCC, in fact, completed these oral histories. The project's purpose was not "a quick turnaround of interviews with the founding members of the association" as the article stated, although the interviews were done on a very timely schedule. The goal of the oral history project was to chronicle these refugee experiences for future generations. And this is what the CSCC actually accomplished.

Unfortunately, the interviews never got transcribed. When the current board discovered the oversight, we offered to return the \$1500 to MHS. But the MHS told us they would prefer that we transcribe the tapes and gave us the time to do it. And that is precisely what we will do to preserve forever and make easily accessible these valuable first hand accounts of the 1948 tragedy in Czechoslovakia.

Small voluntary cultural organizations, like CSCC, contribute countless hours of cultural programming and culture preservation activities in benefit of the community. We are grateful to the MHS for its generous support, advice, and patience.

Renáta Tichá, PhD
President of the Czech & Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota