

CZECHIA AS GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR 2026
Press newsletter August 2026

Between Memory and the Present: The Latest Czech Book Releases Look to the Past—and Offer New Perspectives



The latest books by Czech authors demonstrate just how diverse perspectives on their own history can be: personal and political, documentary and literary, sometimes humorous, at other times unflinching. The books tell of war and occupation, of communism, of the Velvet Revolution, and of German-Czech coexistence—and of how deeply the past continues to resonate today.

Alice Horácková explores just how closely German and Czech history are intertwined in her family novel **"Geteiltes Haus"**, which will be published on August 19 by **Diogenes Verlag**. The story centers on Zdenka and Anežka, a Czech girl and a German girl who grow up in the Giant Mountains. Their friendship endures wars, political upheavals, and the growing tensions between the two nationalities. Horácková draws on her own family's history to paint a vivid panorama of the Sudetenland in the 20th century. "Geteiltes House" is a story about friendship and belonging—and about the impact of political borders on personal relationships.

On February 24, 2022—the day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine—the aging journalist Tom travels with his lover to a Baroque monastery in South Bohemia. He is supposed to be writing an article for a magazine about the Czechs' trust in NATO. But as the present spirals out of control, memories of the Czech past also catch up with him. In his new novel **"Die Hölle gibt es nicht"**, **Jáchym Topol** intertwines personal life crises with Europe's major political upheavals. The experiences of occupation and powerlessness, as well as the hopes of the Velvet Revolution of 1989, continue to resonate into the present and raise the question of what remains of a generation's great hopes. The novel will be published on September 8 by **Suhrkamp Verlag**.

An extraordinary historical document is **Václav Havel's** **"„Ich habe es irgendwo versteckt"**. **Notizen zum „Charta-Jahr“ 1977**," which will be published on September 1 by **Mitteldeutscher Verlag**. In it, Havel describes the early days of Charter 77, the persecution of the signatories, and the interrogations by the Czechoslovak secret police. Havel hid the manuscript from the authorities—and eventually forgot where he had hidden it himself. The text was rediscovered only after his death. This publication, now appearing in German for the first time, offers a direct insight into a decisive phase in the history of Czechoslovak dissidence and into Havel's personal struggle with the communist dictatorship.

In **"Stierkampf in Böhmen," Jan Novák** tells the story of his grandparents, weaving personal memories into the history of Czechoslovakia. His grandparents lived through the war, the postwar period, and the Communist takeover. Their rural way of life is destroyed by the political upheavals. From this family history emerges a vivid portrait of life under the communist regime: of loss, uprooting, and the realization that political decisions profoundly intrude upon private life. Novák presents history from the perspective of those whose daily lives were directly altered by it. The novel will be published on September 1 by **Mitteldeutscher Verlag**.

Jiří Kolář, too, explores the early years of the communist regime in **"Die Leber des Prometheus"**. Written in 1952, the work was confiscated by the Czechoslovak secret police and was long considered lost. It was not until decades later that the text could be reconstructed and published. Kolář combines personal experiences, poetry, and political indictment into an extraordinary literary document. The book demonstrates the possibilities that literature and art can find even under the conditions of a dictatorship—and how a work believed to be lost can become an important testament to its time. The book will be published on October 2 by **Arco Verlag**.

Whether a family novel, an autobiographical memoir, a political historical document, or a poetic text: these new releases make it clear that history in Czech literature is not a closed chapter. It lives on in family histories, in personal memories, and in the question of how history is remembered, concealed, and retold.

Please do get in touch if you would like further information, to receive review copies or to arrange an interview!

Events

- 19.08.2026, 7 pm
Vernissage for the exhibition "Samizdat: Worte der Freiheit in der Tschechoslowakei 1939-1989"
Museum für Kommunikation, Frankfurt am Main
- 28.08.2026, 7 pm
Reading with Alice Horácková: "Geteiltes Haus"
OrankeBuch, Berlin
- 30.08.2026
Literary Zarfest
Bahnhof Pima
- 16.09.2026, 6 pm
Literary Encounters in Graz with Martin Vopěnka, Marek Toman and Stanislav Struhar
Steiermärkische Landesbibliothek, Graz

Book Tips

Jaroslav Rudiš: „Wo die Toten sprechen“
(Luchterhand, to be published on 26. August 2026)



Lorenzo, Caspar, and Miss Detroit are on the road in an old Saab. Three friends, somewhere between middle age and weariness of life. Their destination: the cemeteries of Central Europe. While Lorenzo devours books and tries to write a doctoral dissertation on dead European poets, Miss Detroit, behind the wheel, dreams of becoming a cemetery botanist and talking to the dead through the flowers. And the nearly blind Caspar thinks of his father in the Bohemian Paradise, whose deceased friends still haunt his favorite bar. With every kilometer they drive, the three grow closer to one another and hear the voices of the dead more clearly from grave to grave: What do they talk about when you listen to them? And whose voices are best left unheard? When they beat Reich Citizens to the punch at a Berlin cemetery and steal the bones of a Nazi criminal, an absurd chase begins along the borders of Central Europe.

You can find more information about the book [here](#).

Bianca Bellová: „Der unsichtbare Mann“
(Wieser Verlag, translated by Stefanie Bose, to be published on 1. September 2026)



As is so often the case, the temporal and spatial setting in Bellová's prose remains vague and undefined. It could be today; it could be the 1950s or the 1930s; it could take place in Turkey, Greece, perhaps Spain—or in a completely different place and at a different time. This uncertainty is reflected in the narrator herself—the main character, who one day breaks free from an unhappy marriage and "sets out." She returns to where it all began—her home village—and tries to figure out who she really is and what went wrong in the generations of her parents and grandparents. How her father, the eponymous "invisible man," met a tragic end, and why her mother remained silent for thirty years. She compares the past with the present and contrasts the two—all against the backdrop of the dramatic, tense atmosphere of an unnamed war. Despite all the ambiguity, it becomes clear in the end what the author stands for: for femininity, for emotions, for home and family—and against the ever-recurring human stupidity and ignorance, against envy and hatred, which suffocate people and their souls.

You can find more information about the book [here](#).

Dora Kaprálová: „Die Mariborhynose“
(mikrotext, translaed by Nataša von Kopp, to be published on 8. September 2026)



Die Mariborhynose intertwines the life of a housefly with the love story of the hypnotist Leo Svengali and his assistant Elis. The narrator travels to the small Slovenian town of Maribor to write a travel guide but decides instead to explore the city from the perspective of a fly.

Contemporary figures such as the guitarist Jim, the American court jester Timo, and the 80-year-old hostess Daša—who sees Putin as a savior—appear alongside historical figures of the 20th century, notably Josip Broz Tito, the controversial "well-meaning dictator," the writer Hašek, and the playwright Wedekind. The kaleidoscopic perspective from an insect's point of view enables an original narrative style in which fact and fiction intertwine to create a hypnotic effect

A novel about the Balkans and Europe, as well as about a little-noticed city beneath which the Drava flows darkly, and a reflection on magic, power, and the power of illusion.

You can find more information about the book [here](#).

Jiří Dvořák: „Myko – Wissenswertes aus der Welt der Pilze“
(Ankerwechsel Verlag, translated by Mirko Kraetsch and illustrated by Daniela Olejníková, to be published on 1. September 2026)



Mushrooms do not remain silent. They communicate, connect forests across kilometers, build up and break down, survive catastrophes, and transform poison into life. Their underground network is the largest living network on Earth.

Myko is not a nonfiction book about fungi; it is a nonfiction book by the fungi themselves. A magazine—to be precise. Ten fictional issues, edited by Editor-in-Chief Fungus X. Imperfect, cover history, ecology, sports, and culture from the perspective of a kingdom that has inhabited the Earth far longer than we have.

About Aunt Klothilde, who made Alexander Fleming's invention of penicillin possible in the first place. About the slime mold that mapped out Tokyo's public transit system in 25 hours. About the city mushroom that lifts asphalt.

About the parasol mushroom that grew all the way to the sky and became the sun. Interviews, reports, myths, poems, and ten experiments you can try right away—all with an irony as dry as a well-preserved porcini mushroom.

You can find more information about the book [here](#).

Jana Šrámková & Petra Josefína Stibitzová: „Matilda und der rote Wolf“
(Achse Verlag, translated by Theresa Clauberg, to be published on 1. September 2026)



Matilda is 14 years old and actually a pretty ordinary girl—except that her best friend is a red wolf named Chili. The talking wolverine lives on a houseboat and is constantly causing chaos and spreading good cheer. Together, Matilda and Chili navigate the everyday challenges of growing up—from first crushes to friendship troubles—while also embarking on wild adventures: from pirate raids to trips down the sewers.

This volume brings together 25 two-page comic strips originally published in the popular Czech children's magazine RAKETA. With plenty of humor, imagination, and surreal moments, the short stories of Matilda and Chili are told on the readers' level. The compact format makes this collection ideal for comic fans, but it's also perfect for reluctant readers, as the short, humorous chapters make it easier for them to get into reading.

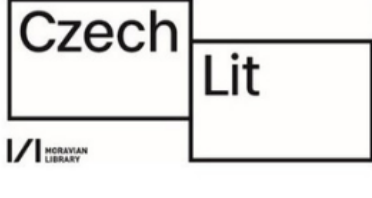
You can find more information about the book [here](#).

About the Guest of Honour

Czechia is the Guest of Honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2026. The Guest of Honour appearance is being organised by the Moravian Library in Brno and its Czech Literature Centre section. It is being financed by public funds from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and is implemented with the support of PPF Foundation. Partner of the Year of Czech Culture and Guest of Honour is Deutsch-Tschechischer Zukunftsfonds / Česko-německý fond budoucnosti. The Frankfurt Book Fair, which will take place from October 7 to 11, 2026, is the world's largest trade fair for publishing. The Guest of Honour presents its literature and culture at the fair, in the city of Frankfurt, and at many other locations in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Czechia's Guest of Honour appearance is themed "Czechia – A Country on the Coast." <https://czechia2026.com/>



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