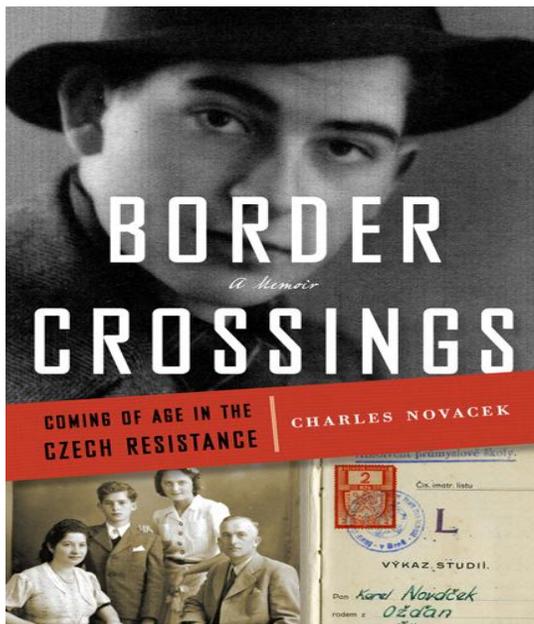


"**Border Crossings** is the well-told story of a young man whose comfortable life is abruptly transformed by the savagery of World War II. Forced to rely on primal instincts and his familiarity with the rugged highlands of Moravia, Charles Novacek casts his lot first with the anti-Hitler underground and then with the resistance to the Nazis' Communist successors. 'My recollections pain me,' he writes, 'still they have made me who I am.' Novacek's experience as a Hungarian-speaking Czecho-Slovak patriot demonstrates the folly of petty nationalism and the resilience of human decency and love."

—**Madeleine Albright**  
former U.S. Secretary of State



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# BORDER CROSSINGS

## Coming of Age in the CZECH RESISTANCE CHARLES NOVACEK

**Charles Novacek** was eleven years old when his father and uncle recruited him into the Czech Resistance. Antonin Novacek not only taught his son to survive in the wild, but also prepared him for wartime: how to resist pain, hunger, and fear—and to trust no one. His assignments included delivering messages to soldiers parachuting behind enemy lines and hiding them in caves he equipped for their shelter.

As a young man, Charles was captured and jailed by the Communists and rescued by an underground resistance network. In too much danger to remain in Czechoslovakia, he staged a daring escape, only to land in a miserable displaced persons camp. His will to live prevailed once again, and Charles eventually married and built a successful life in America.

Filled with heroic adventures and bravery, **Border Crossings** is one man's remarkable tale of his incredible life and a testament to the human capacity to survive.

**Born in Ozdany, Czechoslovakia** in 1928, Charles Novacek immigrated to the United States in 1956, unable to speak English, yet he went on to become the chief engineer for Cobo Hall, Detroit's convention center. He directed other projects, including the Chrysler Styling Complex designed by Minoru Yamasaki.

Novacek received an ACI Construction Practice Award from the American Concrete Institute and a Distinguished Service Award from the Michigan Society of Professional Engineers. In addition to being an accomplished engineer, Novacek was a talented artist who carved stone and painted many fine and vibrant works, and a world traveler who was ever interested in the beauty and intricacy of other cultures. He was a lifelong learner who continually sought knowledge, earning two masters degrees and studying Chinese in his retirement years.

Novacek died in Detroit, Michigan in 2007.

**TEN21  
PRESS**  
Detroit 48201

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Sandra Novacek  
313.832.1148, novaceks@att.net  
**www.charlesnovacekbooks.com**  
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# ADVANCE PRAISE FOR **BORDER CROSSINGS**

"*Border Crossings* is the **well-told** and **dramatic story** of a young man whose comfortable life is abruptly transformed by the savagery of World War II. Forced to rely on primal instincts and his familiarity with the rugged highlands of Moravia, Charles Novacek casts his lot first with the anti-Hitler Underground and then with the resistance to the Nazis' Communist successors. 'My recollections pain me,' he writes, 'still, they have made me who I am.' Novacek's experience as a Hungarian-speaking Czecho-Slovak patriot demonstrates the folly of petty nationalism and the **resilience of human decency and love.**"

— **MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, former U.S. Secretary of State**

"I have been transformed by this **honest, extraordinary telling.** In *Border Crossings* Charles Novacek shows us, through his personal story (told as if we are right there in the room with him) the true face of totalitarianism; he reminds us of the preciousness, the miracle, of freedom. What a gift he has given us--and what a gift his wife, Sandra, has offered us, as well, in making sure that his **brave story** is here for the world to read. This is **a powerful memoir that crosses all borders** and **speaks directly to the human heart.**"

—**JOSEPH HURKA, author of *Fields of Light: A Son Remembers His Heroic Father***

"Here is **a story that is meant to survive**, just as its teller was. I got to know Charles in his later years but only had hints of what is contained in these pages. They are **riveting.** I was drawn into the best and worst of humanity and, not incidentally, into the history of the West in the mid-twentieth century. **Courage, love, despair,** a fierce will are all preserved with the help of one who was "not the love of Charles' life. . . but his last love."

— **JOHN KOTRE, PH.D., author of *White Gloves: How We Create Ourselves Through Memory***

"*Border Crossings* helps fill the lack of personal accounts of resistance movements amidst a voluminous array of **World War II** literature. This **compelling memoir**, written through the eyes of young Charles, shows how circumstances required him to become a shrewd hero. In his opposition first toward Nazism and then Communism, Charles Novacek's personal story illustrates why people sacrifice themselves and their families for an ideal. **Intimate, intense, fascinating!**"

—**CHRISTINA VELLA, coauthor of *The Hitler Kiss***