

August 25, 1968

Report from Political Board of Polish Second Army

Citation:

"Report from Political Board of Polish Second Army", August 25, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Institute of National Remembrance or Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN BU 029 58/8. Translated for CWIHP from the original Polish by Jaroslaw Garlinski. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/110641>

Summary:

Report on the use of propaganda materials and how they have been distributed in Czech cities and villages. It also lists several incidents of hostility expressed by Czech soldiers/citizens towards Warsaw Pact soldiers.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

6. Translation of document entitled '25-08-68.' from the Operation 'Danube' set

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cc: file [handwritten]

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SECRET

MAIN [?] POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE POLISH ARMY
No. 4 [?]

Copy

First Department [?] [illegible]

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[illegible] 989 [illegible] 24. [?] 08.08

.08 1968 [illegible] REPORT No. 04301 -1- [handwritten]

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from Polish Second Army's Political Department at 19:00 hours 25.08.1968

Altogether the Army has 40 propaganda trucks and public address systems. On the march the p/a systems were used to broadcast propaganda aimed at the urban and rural populations as well as at Czechoslovak troops. The p/a systems advanced as part of the lead tactical units. Announcers and interpreters read out the texts from 5 different versions of prepared bulletins and announcements. The propaganda trucks carried out a similar task in the advance parties of regiments and other independent units. The most widely used announcements were those aimed at people carrying out passive resistance, at the inhabitants of towns and housing estates congregating on the roads. During the first two days the audience's reaction was very varied. The soldiers listened indifferently, village inhabitants listened for the most part in silence and behaved calmly. The women usually cried. The urban population reacted quite differently and our calls were usually greeted with whistling and other signs of disapproval, while young people reacted the most provocatively.

In recent days the p/a systems and the propaganda trucks have been deployed in such a way that they approach towns and housing estates escorted by specially assigned troops broadcasting in Czech bulletins and statements recorded from Polish Radio programs in Czech, they also read aloud the text of materials and leaflets in Czech sent by the Main Political Department, as well as their own announcements, appeals and other materials explaining the objectives and reasons for our presence in the CSSR.

We now observe the continual growth of the Czechoslovak people's interest in our broadcasts and propaganda materials. There is a real lack of solid information amongst the population. The materials distributed by us are eagerly read by the people and by the soldiers of the CPA, and for instance in the town of Hradec Králové CPA soldiers observed taking our leaflets reacted strongly to their officer who wanted to prevent them reading these leaflets and they even forced him to read one of them aloud. Our propaganda

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trucks can work only when protected by troops, since the possibility of provocation, such as throwing stones and other objects at them, cannot be excluded. In addition to the propaganda trucks, we are also using helicopters specifically to scatter leaflets over larger towns and housing estates. Today we also used hand-held devices to throw leaflets into Czechoslovak Army barracks. The Army's printing facilities are used mainly to produce a field military paper 'Soldier of the People' as well as to print leaflets and other propaganda materials for our own forces.

□The Army's surveillance truck is used for systematically monitoring broadcasts by hostile radio stations also working in our forces' operational area. The prepared radio surveillance report is submitted daily to Army HQ and is used to develop the form and methods of our counter-measures against hostile propaganda. The radio station PAR-7 was activated this afternoon. Until the arrival of a studio, the station, on the orders of the Head of Political Department 2A, will be used to retransmit Polish Radio programs in Czech as well as to broadcast its own recordings of appeals, announcements and bulletins directed at the civilian population and at the Czechoslovak Army.

A group of officers from the Main Political Department arrived yesterday and was sent to garrison HQs and started work.

□Hitherto, according to information received, these officers have in a great many military districts made contact in a great many places with Czechoslovak communists.

□A number of meetings of party activists have been held in secret. As more detailed information becomes available we shall cover it in subsequent reports.

Interpreters sent to Political Department 2A are used in accordance with the needs of Army HQ and of the Technical Department [?]. They act as intermediaries at discussions and meetings between Czechoslovak delegations and our officers. In addition, they are used [last two words handwritten] to record tapes of texts, appeals and announcements prepared by us aimed at the civilian population and the Czechoslovak Army. The interpreters also carry out monitoring of illegal Czechoslovak radio stations and record for our propaganda

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needs [A line appears to have been covered up at the bottom of p.2.]..... in Czech. It should be emphasized that the selection of translators has been none too good; only about 50% of them have a good command of the Czech language. Since the tasks facing the interpreters continue to grow, we request that the Main Political Department and the Ministry of Defense's Personnel Department carry out a rotation of interpreters. Withdrawing the incompetent ones and replacing them with new people with a good command of the Czech language.

There are also 12 civilian party activists working in our forces' operational area. The remainder of the groups dispatched by the Wroclaw and Katowice committees have been sent home on General Szlachcic's orders. Hitherto we have no information on the results of the activists' work in the areas occupied by us.

Hitherto 12 garrison HQs have been formed: Hradec Králové, Jaromer, Pardubice, Iczyn, Dvur Králové, Horice, Havlíckuv Brod, Sumperek, Miasto Zdrój, Svitava, Hrensko,

Trutno.

□ It has been impossible to set up HQs in the towns of Czeslav, Hrubin and Bystrica owing to the decidedly hostile attitude of the local authorities, who refused to agree to any type of co-operation, possibly because of the absence of our forces in the area.

We encountered relatively the fewest problems in setting up HQs in the towns of Iczyn and Dvur Králové, where the local authorities without any reluctance assigned accommodation and declared their co-operation in maintaining law and order in town.

In most cases, however, the authorities are assigning accommodation on the edge of town. They are not in the least interested in co-operation and declare that they can maintain law and order on their own. They consider such co-operation with the Polish HQs to be undesirable. The situation is complicated by the fact that the local Czechoslovak activists in public meetings show at the very least great reserve towards us, and often even clear hostility, while individually they do not wish to talk with us, fearful of being considered collaborators.

□ At present hostile Czech-language radio centers are employing large-scale moral blackmail towards the Czechoslovak people, attacking the efforts of all those who are co-operating with the 'occupation' forces. Hence perhaps many people's fears are caused by this atmosphere.

Lieutenant Kazimierz Amaszko from the assault battalion and at the head of a 17-man assault team captured a radio station in the town of Litomyšl which was guarded by more than 200 Czechoslovak soldiers.

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□ Corporal Józef Jedynak from military unit 3615, as a result of strenuous efforts, discovered and located a relay station, which was then disabled.

□ Lieutenant Eugeniusz Browarski, the assault battalion's primary party organization Secretary, is taking an active part in all assault operations, he is distinguishing himself by his positive attitude, by his competent linking of combat operations with propaganda work with the civilian population.

□ Senior Sergeant Tadeusz Marszalek, a driver in 2A [?] MT Regiment, is distinguishing himself by his exceptional dedication, initiative and courage in accomplishing his tasks; he volunteered to distribute propaganda in the field.

Increased political activity has been observed in Czechoslovak barracks and dispersal areas. Officers sent by higher commands are visiting individual units. In the some of our garrison areas soldiers' rallies have been observed. An attempt was made to drive out the tanks in the town of Czeslav, where the Czechoslovak 3rd Tank Regiment is stationed.

□ In the town of Iczyn, where an engineer brigade is stationed, an effort has been made to fire up the tractor-trailers.

□ These efforts were abandoned owing to our commanders' decisive actions.

□ In the town of Pardubice about 40 vehicles have so far managed to slip individually

away from the barracks into the forest. A great many of them were probably carrying explosives.

□ In Jaromer, where the commander and his 2 i/c are Czechoslovak nationals of Jewish descent, one can see a particularly arrogant attitude on the part of the officers and men towards our forces. A major in the Czechoslovak Army was observed cleaning the asphalt on the road and a lieutenant colonel was painting hostile signs. Overall, the leadership and soldiers of the Czechoslovak Army distinguish themselves by their unfriendly and often hostile attitude towards our units.

Requests:

- we request that radio station PAR-7, operating on the 1239 frequency, be made available from today for military use. This frequency was allocated to the Polish Army's Main Political Department's special propaganda security group for 1968 for monitoring purposes only. Major Tadeusz Syslo [?] can speak to this matter.

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I ask for a speedy response in this matter.

□□□□□□□□ Major Skorupka

□□□□ HEAD OF POLISH SECOND ARMY'S POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

□□□□□ Brigadier General Wlodzimierz SAWCZUK

□□ I confirm conformity with the original:

□ DUTY OPERATIONS OFFICER POLISH ARMY'S MAIN POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

□□□ Luszczyna [handwritten signature]

□□□ Colonel Czeslaw LUSZCZYNA

in 5 copies

1 - General Urbanowicz and cc: file

2 - General Czapla

3 - General Grudzien

4 - General Polanski

5 - General Szydowski

Set

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□□□□□□□□ Translated thanks to a generous contribution from
John A. Adams and the John A. Adams Center for Military History and Strategic
Analysis
at the Virginia Military Institute.