

August 30, 1968

**P. Shelest Writes to the CC CPSU on a Radio Liberty
Broadcast**

Citation:

"P. Shelest Writes to the CC CPSU on a Radio Liberty Broadcast", August 30, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 32, Ll. 207-208. Translated for CWIHP by Mark Kramer.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112460>

Summary:

P. Shelest writes a letter about an appeal in Ukrainian broadcast on Radio Liberty regarding the troubles in Czechoslovakia.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

C P S U C C

On 27 August, Radio Liberty broadcast a Ukrainian-language appeal from the Czech writer Miroslav Zikmund to the Soviet public.[1] This appeal reportedly had been disseminated earlier by the underground "Brno" radio station.[2]

"In these tragic times for my native land," the appeal says, "I, Miroslav Zikmund, appeal to the public of the Soviet Union. . . . You always referred to us [Czechoslovakia] as the most loyal country in the entire socialist camp. Can you really now believe that we are counterrevolutionaries?"

"I firmly appeal to you: Demand from your leaders - from Leonid Brezhnev, Kosygin, Suslov, and other Politburo members as well as from the directors of factories, research institutes, and editorial boards - that the occupation of my homeland cease immediately. Demand an explanation of this unsurpassed treachery by your state officials, who have sacrificed the idea of socialism for great-power interests, caused a split in the international Communist movement, and besmirched the honor of the Soviet peoples."

Radio Liberty emphasized that Zikmund is speaking not only for himself, but also on behalf of his friend and fellow writer, Jiří Hanzelka, who has traveled many times to the USSR.

In the final part of his statement, Zikmund specifically appealed to his friends in the Soviet Union, saying: "I request that you, Zhenya Evtushenko, not remain silent.[3] Although I am speaking with you today on my own, without Yurii Fedorovich, this does not mean that he is of a different view.[4] On the contrary, how could he feel differently when NKVD agents are riding all around our country, just as they did in your country during the Stalinist terror, to arrest thousands of our people who are guilty only of having sought true socialism - socialism with a human face - and of having yearned for freedom, independence, and sovereignty for nations throughout the world, including Czechoslovakia? I request that you not remain silent in the face of this terrible aggression!"

Reported for informational purposes.

SECRETARY OF THE CC, CP OF UKRAINE P. SHELEST

30 August 1968

No. 1/95

[1]TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Miroslav Zikmund was a prominent Czech writer and commentator on international affairs. He co-authored many books with Jiří Hanzelka, another highly respected writer who was a signatory of the "2,000 Words" manifesto and an ardent proponent of drastic reform. Their books were popular not only in Czechoslovakia, but also in many foreign countries, including the Soviet Union. Several of Zikmund's and Hanzelka's works were translated into Russian, English, German, and other languages. For a representative sample of their output in Czech, see *Afrika - snu a skutečnosti* (Prague: Orbis, 1955); *Tam za rekou je Argentina* (Prague: Orbis, 1956); *Obrácený půlměsíc* (Prague: Nakladatelství Politické Literatury, 1961); and *Cejlon - raj bez andělů*, 2nd ed. (Prague: Svoboda, 1991). See also a collection of some of their other essays in *Zvláštní zpráva* (Prague: Lidové nakladatelství, 1990).

[2]TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: A lengthy, top-secret report compiled by the Soviet KGB in October 1968 noted that the "Brno" underground radio station was one of at least 35

such facilities that were operating unhindered in Czechoslovakia during the first week after the invasion. "O deyatel'nosti kontrrevolyutsionnogo podpol'ya v Chekhoslovakii," report from A. Sakharovskii, head of the KGB's 1st Main Directorate, October 1968 (Top Secret/Special Dossier), in RGANI, F. 4, Op. 21, D. 32, Ll. 99-157. Even after these transmitters were discovered, many continued to function for several days longer.

[3]TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Zhenya is the diminutive for the first name of the well-known Soviet poet and publicist Evgenii Evtushenko. Unlike the great dissident Andrei Sakharov and a number of other Soviet human rights activists (including a small group who were beaten and arrested after staging a demonstration in Red Square to protest the Soviet invasion), Evtushenko failed to speak out against the intervention in Czechoslovakia.

[4]TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Zikmund is referring here to Jiří Hanzelka, using the Ukrainian version of his given name and adding a patronymic.