

October 17, 1989
Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior Memorandum,
“Information on the Security Situation in the CSSR,”
17 October 1989

Citation:

"Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior Memorandum, "Information on the Security Situation in the CSSR," 17 October 1989", October 17, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, A. Lorenc et al., T8/91 vol. XIX., envelope 1, #79-84 (also vol. XXI, #2242-2247). Published in Czech in Organizace a Řízení, Represe v ĚSSR: Operaèní Štáby Generála Lorence 1988-1989, Edice Dokumentù Vol. 4/III (Úřad Dokumentace a Vyšetřování Zloèinù Komunistu 1998). Translated for CWIHP by Caroline Kovtun
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117219>

Summary:

The Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior reports on the state of security within the CSSR. A growing anti-communist movement is active within the CSSR, with some cooperation of the "internal enemy" with Western political and ideological groups. Increased levels of crime, violence, and alcoholism are reported.

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (FMV)

OV-0115/A-89

In Prague, 17 October 1989

CONFIDENTIAL

Print-out #33

Number of pages:13

For a meeting of the government of the CSSR

Matter: Information on the security situation in the CSSR

The information is rendered according to a proposal by the Minister of the Interior

Contents: Information on the security interior of the CSSR situation in the CSSR

[...] 6

Composed by:

František Kincl

Minister of the Interior of the CSSR

Designated as personal information for member of the government of the CSSR, to be returned upon acquaintance

with the material!

Information on the security situation in the CSSR

After the unsuccessful acts of the internal enemies for the 21 August anniversary, pressure in the enemy camp was stepped up to perfect the organizational structures of individual enemy groups and to elaborate a common platform.

At the same time the opponent is concentrating his energies, besides the coordinated distribution of various declarations, on the elaboration of a common strategic plan of the opposition in the CSSR and the preparation of a joint political party-the so-called Party of the United Opposition. This was also established at the meeting of the consultative group of the independent initiatives (the representatives of the Movement for Civic Freedom (HOS), the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiatives and KSP Renewal) on 2 October 1989 in Prague. The aim of the opponent to form a so-called Civic Committee also persists. The purpose of these efforts is the creation of a representative organ of the opposition and to bring the state and party organs to a "round-table" discussion following the Polish and Hungarian models.

Besides the efforts for integration, the tendency of the internal enemy to engage official organizations in their activity, with the intent of gaining their own legalization and achieving a dialog between official and so-called independent organizations, is becoming more pronounced. It is possible to introduce as an example the efforts of the "Independent World Association-initiatives for the demilitarization of society" to engage the Czechoslovak World Organization in the preparation of the so-called Helsinki Assembly for Peace and Democracy with a seat in Prague (the origin of which is prepared in the first half 1990) and the efforts of the preparatory committee "Society for the study of democratic socialism" to organize an international seminar on Socialist Internationales in cooperation with Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Cooperation in November of this year.

The internal enemy is also trying to penetrate into the superstructures of the society. This can especially be seen in the areas of scientific and cultural intelligence, and not only in forced petition signings, but also in the creation of other so-called independent initiatives. An example of this is the establishment of the initiative "MOST",¹⁴ made up of cultural workers which should also become the mediator of dialog between the enemy environment and official organizations, and also establish the so-called Circle of the Independent Intelligence (KNI), whose goal is to create a

platform uniting scientific workers who are opposed to the politics of the CPCz. Its efforts are concentrated on the discrediting and disbanding of the SSM [youth union], and the creation of a series of independent youth initiatives. The evidence for this is the creation of the new "politically independent youth union" in the central Bohemian region and other places.

A dangerous phenomenon related to the coming anniversary of the origin of the CSR and the effort to activate high school youth, is the distribution of anonymous anti-communist letters from Prague addressed to high schools. For now, this has been proven in eastern, southern and northern regions. They summon the directors, pedagogical counsels and SSM groups [youth unions] to "a dignified celebration of the 28 October" and to the elevation of the work of T. G. Masaryk. They condemn the document "Lesson from the crisis development..." and rate positively the intentions of the so-called Prague spring 1968. It is possible to assume that they will be gradually distributed on the entire territory of the CSSR and broad-cast in the transmissions of the inflammatory stations Radio Free Europe and Voice of America, with the aim of sending out their message to the widest Czechoslovak society.

The internal structure of individual initiatives is also gradually being strengthened with the aim of increasing their ability to act on the entire territory. For example, during the so-called conference of Democratic Initiatives on 10-16 September 1989, the group was further politicized, reflected in the newly approved title "Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative, Political and Social Movement" (CSDI), the organizational policies and program contents. The immediate goal was the expansion of the member base, the strengthening of the organizational structure, the establishing of local and provincial groups, and the development of activity in thematic units and consumer clubs. The realization of these goals is tied to the creation of satellite organizations, working as sections of CSDI (e.g. the student, ecological and others) with their own program, making possible for them the future transition to their own political organization. Proof of this are the intentions to change, for example, the so-called ecological section into the Green Party.

Several negative political manifestations in the activity of non-communist parties in the CSSR are multiplying. Right-wing and religious-oriented functionaries in centers and regions are trying to bring about changes in the positions of these parties in the political system independent of the CPCz line and establish political pluralism. These tendencies are especially marked in the functionaries and member bases of -SL and -SS.15

During the realization of his goals, the internal enemy is also counting on increased support for his activity from the Polish Solidarity party as government and parliamentary powers and the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the youth organization FIDESZ as an organization directly connected to the politics of the state with a decisive influence in parliament, but also with the support of the official institutions and personages of Hungary. The contacts with several individuals and groups from the USSR, especially journalistic and historic-theoretical circles, with the representatives of so-called independent initiatives are becoming especially important for the moral support of the enemy.

The cooperation of the internal enemy with Western political structures and official institutions is on a qualitatively higher level. The official actors of the Austrian SPÖ and the West German SPD are expressing their support for the activity of the so-called Society for the Study of Democratic Socialism, which should gradually change into assistance during the organizing of a party of the social democratic type. Honorable awards from various Western foundations have been given to the head representatives of the so-called independent initiatives in the CSSR, as an expression of appreciation of their "fight" for human rights. An example of this is the award of "German Publishers" with a grant of 25,000 DM given to Václav Havel, which is supposed to be used for the founding and anti-social activity of the so-called

publishing cooperative ATLANTIS.

Besides the activity of the internal enemy, Western ideological centers and emigrant groups are trying to influence the Czechoslovak public and organize provocative acts even on the territory of socialist countries. Polish Solidarity together with the Czechoslovak emigration is organizing a seminar in the beginning of November this year in Bratislava devoted to the problems of culture in Central Europe, a part of which will be an overview of "Czechoslovak independent and emigre literature." Underground concerts of Czechoslovak emigrants and meetings with the representatives of so-called independent initiatives are organized in Hungary by ideological centers.

The simultaneous activity of the internal enemy nevertheless does not fulfill the expectations of the Western ideological centers about the ability of the opposing forces in the CSSR to act. There is pressure from abroad on the Charter-77 and other initiatives to present themselves in public more conspicuously and to "come out of illegality" and politicize their activity, under threat of ending their financial support. The nearest convenient occasion for this is the anniversary of the origin of the CSR [Czechoslovak Republic]. A concrete example is the pressure on the representatives of CSDI to announce their formation of a political party at the above-mentioned anniversary.

The meeting of the speakers of Charter-77 on 23 September 1989[1] was supposed to prepare concrete acts, but it was prevented. Vaclav Havel prepared the so-called pronouncement for the 28 October 17 for this occasion, in which the conditions of the first republic are idealized and the legalization of the opposition, the end of the applicability of the temporary agreement on the stay of Soviet troops in CSSR, and the destruction of barricades on the borders are demanded. Other groups are to prepare analogous pronouncements. The endeavor of the opponent is to establish from these declarations a common position of the so-called independent initiatives for the anniversary of the origin of the CSSR.

A meeting of the representatives of illegal organizations The Independent World Coalition, The Movement for Civic Freedom and the Czechoslovak Independent Initiatives on 3 October 1989 in Prague had the same purpose. Among other things, it was agreed that if they were not allowed to use any spaces for their "celebrations", they would arrange a gathering in the pedestrian zone in Prague.

The speakers of "Charter-77" sent a letter on 26 September 1989 to the National Committee of the capital Prague, in which they proposed allowing "Charter-77" to organize their own "independent reminder of this state holiday", and for its implementation they recommended the lease of a hall of the Radio Palace or Lucerna type.

The coordinating committee, made up of representatives of from HOS, CSDI and Renewal, are organizing the demonstration. On 2 October 1989 Rudolf Battek and Ladislav Lis met with Dr. Martin Houska of the National Committee of Prague, and they requested in the name of HOS, CSDI and Renewal a permit for a demonstration on 28 October 1989 at 3 p.m. or 6 p.m. on an open space (Letná plain, Hvezda park, in front of the park of culture and the vacation house of Julius Fucik or the memorial at Vitkov). In connection with this request, during a meeting at the department of internal affairs of the ONV Prague 7 on 3 October 1989, they probed the possibility of obtaining a permit for a demonstration on Letná plain. This program is proposed at the gathering: after the opening ceremony, several main Czechoslovak actors will read quotations from Capek,[2] followed by the main declaration probably by V. Havel with a demand for a dialog with the opposition and free elections.

It is evident from the context of the activity of the opposition, that through these

requests it is trying to rid itself of responsibility for eventual consequences of the anti-social gathering, which they are striving for, and blame the state and party organs.

The climax of the acts motivated by the anniversary of the origin of the CSR is supposed to be a common demonstration of so-called independent initiatives in the center of Prague on 28 October 1989. For now there are various opinions as to its concrete shape.

Just as in August of last year the enemy environment is counting on the presence of representatives of Solidarity and the Hungarian opposition at the demonstration. A meeting of the delegates of CSDI, "Charter-77", Renewal and HOS with the delegates of the Hungarian Democratic Forum is also planned for this day to establish a common committee.

Despite the efforts of the radical part of the opposition, represented by T. Hradlik, to concentrate enemy powers in Prague, it can be expected that the acts of 28 October 1989 will cross over to other parts of the republic. Evidence has been ascertained of the efforts of the representatives of HOS and the T. G. Masaryk society to organize a demonstration in Brno on Victory Boulevard and Place of Peace for the renaming of Victory Boulevard to Masaryk street.

As evidenced from the above-mentioned facts, despite the organizational measures and the continuing efforts for integration, diversity of opinion and disunity on how to organize the anti-social gathering persists in the enemy camp. Especially prevalent are the fears of counter measures by state organs and the subsequent "crash" of the prepared acts, as was in August. The moderate wing of the opposition is apprehensive of the radicalization of a growing part of the group, especially young members and adherents, which could lead them to a direct clash with the state powers and even impede the long-term goals and plans of the opposition.

On the other hand they are well aware that the current international and internal political conditions provide them with a suitable space for such a gathering, and to not take advantage of them could result in isolation and loss of support not only from abroad, but also from the politicized part of their followers, especially the young.

For these reasons with 28 August nearing, it is possible to expect increased activity on the part of the internal enemy trying to correct the "bad impression" from August of this year.

The situation regarding the safe-guarding of the state border of the CSSR was to some extent complicated by the decisions of the Hungarian government on 11 September 1989 to enable citizens from the GDR to travel to any country. As a result of this, the CSSR has practically become a transit stop for them before emigrating to capitalist countries. In total 3,288 trespassers were caught on state borders in September 1989, 3,082 of them were citizens from GDR. In September there were 9 [incidents of] violent border crossings at passport control booths from the CSSR to Hungary. In this period the attitude of the Hungarian passport and border organs toward cooperation with Czechoslovakia has worsened, since they refuse to extradite the citizens from the GDR who illegally crossed the border between the CSSR and Hungary.

After the state organs of the GDR decided on 3 October 1989, to put an end to GDR citizens' [ability to] travel without a visa or passport to the CSSR, the number of individuals arriving from the GDR dramatically de-creased. At the same time, however, the number of attempts to illegally cross the borders into the CSSR have risen abruptly. For example, just between 3 and 5 of October 1989, 726 GDR citizens who had penetrated into the CSSR in order to emigrate were detained. The situation calmed down after measures were implemented by the organs of the CSSR and GDR.

A difficult situation came about at the end of September and beginning of August 1989, on the border with Poland, where it was not possible to secure safe transit for overly full international trains from Poland. The delays frequently exceeded 10 hours. There were also problems in clearing Polish citizens at the Czechoslovak-Austrian border, where the waiting period exceeded 8 hours. The reason for this was the unusually high number of traveling Polish nationals and their strict clearance by Austrian customs officials. More attention is being paid to the situation on the state borders with Poland, Hungary and the GDR, and necessary measures will be taken according to its concrete development.

There is unrest among Czechoslovak citizens because citizens of Poland, Hungary and in part the USSR buy up consumer goods during their stay, especially the ones imported from capitalist countries, mostly foodstuffs of all kinds, but also clothes, footwear, sporting goods, installation and building materials, etc. Purchases of foodstuffs reaching 1,500 Kcs are not exceptional. In some areas, especially those close to the borders, it is becoming more difficult to maintain fuel supplies and even certain essential foods. As a result, our citizens are criticizing party and state organs.

The public security situation in the CSSR in 1989 was basically stabilized, and peace and order were secured. Disciplinary units were dispatched only in the event of provocative gatherings of anti-socialist forces in January, May and August in Prague. Decisive cooperative measures between other units of the security apparatus and the People's Militias brought the gatherings under control. Several instances of disturbing the peace also arose during sporting and cultural events. These, however, never went beyond the city limits and did not require special forces or measures.

Since the beginning of the year (especially in the first quarter and before 21 August), a significant increase in anonymous phone calls and letters was noted (in the end of September the number exceeded 520), in which the culprits threatened terrorist acts. There is a clear shift in their intentions. In the beginning of the year in almost all cases the destruction of objects or means of transportation was threatened. Recently there have been a growing number of individual death threats, above all [aimed at] those who publicly denounced the enemy acts of anti-socialist elements.

The anonymous threats were proven to be false through effected measures. Finding the culprits has not been successful, with only around 15% of cases closed. More than 2.5 thousand flyers and 500 harmful letters were recorded. They were largely aimed at party and state functionaries.

The number of recorded criminal acts and felonies increased slightly to a total of 135,234, with a constant level of 80% of cases closed. Damages due to by the crime rate rose by more than 64 million Kcs and exceeded 511 million Kcs. The slight increase in the crime rate was caused by the greater number of general criminal acts (2.3% more). The biggest gain in the crime rate was noted in property crimes, rising by 3.2%, with 62% of all such cases closed. Property crime represented about half of all crimes committed in the CSSR. Breaking and entering sustained the most striking growth, climbing by 8%. Breaking and entering into apartments is increasing ominously, the number of incidents up by 1,641 from last year, while the rate of cases closed remains at 55%.

The number of violent acts remains at the same level of the previous period, with 95% of cases closed. The number of the most serious violent crimes has gone up, 2 murders added to a total of 89 cases (with 96.6% of them closed), and 54 cases of burglary added to 651 (with 87.6% of them closed).

Out of the specific and key problems in the fight against crime, the criminal relapse and violent crime committed by Gypsies are rising, constituting almost two thirds of all crime and more than one third of white-collar crime. The slight increase in crime

among young people continues. They commit 16% of all crimes in general and one third of all white-collar crime. Most disturbing is the high rate of criminality among young Gypsies, representing 25% of crimes committed by young people, exceeding 40% in Slovakia.

There is a very negative situation in the area of non-alcoholic addiction. The number of addicts recorded by the organs of the VB (Public Security) is close to 7,000. About half are individuals 18-25 years of age, and some addicts are even children 15 and younger, with 200 such cases recorded. As a result of abuse of dangerous substances 21 people have died in an estimated period.

In total 21,877 cases of white-collar crimes and felonies have been solved, but the documented damages grew by 79 million Kcs. and exceeded 250 million Kcs. The investigative organs and economic organizations share slightly less than 9% of crimes solved, although for the most part they are infractions in the work-place. The most frequent white-collar crime remains burglary of property in socialist possession. The growing delinquency of work bosses in the economic sector is evidenced in the uncovering of 1,924 crimes against economic order (a growth of 829).

The numerous extraordinary events are causing not insignificant damage to the national economy. They outweighed fires, traffic break-downs and accidents, and mishaps of public rail transportation. The most frequent cause of the extraordinary events is still the disturbance of work procedures, not respecting technical safety, gross violation of policies and regulations on work safety.

The number of traffic accidents have also increased. There have been 48,912 traffic accidents, which is basically at the same level as last year. The consequences are in all indications the most dire. In all 589 people have died (up by 50), 2,619 were heavily injured (up by 401), and serious damages have also increased. There have occurred 3,122 accidents induced by alcohol, an increase of 111.

+ + +

Preventive and destructive measures are undertaken in order to suppress the enemy's activity, frustrate the efforts to unite individual groups and impede the enemy's ability to act, especially that of the organizers of enemy acts.

In the places of the assumed origin of mass anti-social gatherings and in places with a concentration of enemy individuals, especially in Prague, Brno and Bratislava, the patrol units of the VB will be strengthened, with the aim of preventing the distribution of flyers and stopping enemy elements from participating in anti-social gatherings.

In all regions of the CSSR measure have been taken to prevent the participation of the main enemies at anti-social gatherings, especially in Prague. Analogous measures are also undertaken with respect to enemies from abroad.

In the event of mass anti-social gatherings VB and LM units will be ready to intervene for the use of more peaceful means.

[1] The first Czechoslovak Republic was founded in Prague by official declaration of the Czech National Council on 28 October 1989. This day was subsequently celebrated as the national independence day until the Communist takeover in 1948.

[2]Karel Capek, well-known author of numerous short stories, political observer, journalist, friend of President T.G. Masaryk (1890-1938)