

CZECHOSLOVAK NEWSLETTER

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SCANDALOUS MISMANAGEMENT

Vasil Bil'ak, a member of the Presidium of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and a Central Committee secretary, reported to the committee, meeting in Prague on October 30, that the whole Czechoslovak economy was in trouble. "We have overcome more difficult situations in the past," he reassured the committee members. "The whole imperialist world turned against us after February 1948 [when the communists took over]. They tried everything — discrimination, intimidation, blackmail, even embargo — but we have prevailed."

And yet, have they? Poland, Rumania, even Hungary are facing mounting economic problems. Chairman Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow and Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal in Prague have both warned their countrymen of coming difficulties in the supply of consumer goods. Both have had to turn to what were regarded as the remnants of capitalism, the private plots on collective farms, to supplement from this tiny fraction of all arable land the sagging output of socialized agriculture. After more than sixty years of communist direction of the Soviet Union and more than thirty years in Czechoslovakia an appeal has been made to citizens to use every scrap of idle land in order to boost the production from private plots.

This scandalous mismanagement is being watched by the capitalist West with mixed feelings — of vindication that the free enterprise system works and also of eager anticipation of the profitable market for its surpluses which the communist countries need for survival. "A policy of blackmail" is how Bil'ak referred to it. "Food is becoming an important economic and ideological instrument of foreign policy," he told Central Committee members. "In the hands of the socialist countries it is used exclusively for humanitarian ends, for unselfish aid to those suffering privation. Imperialism, on the other hand, misuses grain and other farm produce

as an instrument of blackmail." It is to be wondered which countries the Eastern bloc provides with unselfish assistance to alleviate hunger.

First it was Rumania, and now Poland and Hungary have applied for membership of the International Monetary Fund, probably with Soviet consent. Sooner or later Czechoslovakia will follow suit. It was under Soviet pressure that it was forced to quit the fund in the past. Now it is being hoped that the fund will bail out the bankrupt socialist economies, saving the inefficient system from total collapse and shoring up the privileges of the communist ruling elite. The Soviet Union created Comecon as a counterpoise to the "capitalist" Western community to prove that the "socialist" economy was superior, and with the ultimate purpose of making Eastern Europe not only economically but also politically tributary to Moscow. The project has failed. The economy of the East is in a serious plight. Will the West continue to render assistance without requiring the communist regimes to reform the system? Is it to go on succoring a system unable to provide an acceptable standard of living for people who are denied basic civil and political freedoms, who have to live in conditions that have come to be called "Biafra of the spirit"?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE EAST'S NEW ECONOMIC CASUALTY

Three main issues were on the agenda of the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held in Prague on October 29 and 30: development of agriculture and food supplies, and means to improve the system of planned management in agriculture; an assessment of the fulfillment of the 1981 economic plan and preparations for the 1982 plan; and the international situation. The most important of the three was the state of agriculture, where poor performance has affected all other sectors of the Czechoslovak economy, including foreign economic relations.

The report on the state of agriculture was delivered by František Pitra, a new committee secretary. Federal Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal spoke about the economic plans, and Vasil Bil'ak, a committee secretary and member of the party Presidium, dealt with the international situation. The reports were gloomy. The New York Times published its account of Štrougal's address on November 8 under the headline, "Czechoslovakia, the East's New Economic Casualty." Bil'ak warned of coming economic difficulties and called for "mobilization of the party." In the wake of the reports the Central Committee issued a statement that "in spite of our achievements, our agriculture was unable to put all available means to use to increase production and efficiency. . . . It proved impossible to achieve proportional growth in crop and livestock production or to realize desired changes in structure."

The Central Committee served notice that the growth of consumption could not be satisfied by imports. "Czechoslovakia's own production must be increased instead." To this end, farming methods must be intensified and every bit of available arable land put to use. On the economic front, it stated: "We have failed

... to improve the efficiency and quality of work. . . . Certain distortions have affected planned targets. Production has been adjusting to the needs of the population only slowly. . . . Grain output is behind [and] the buildup of stocks has left much to be desired."

[According to Ota Šik, the Czech reform economist who left Czechoslovakia after the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, and now lives and teaches in Switzerland, Czechoslovakia's inventories rose by 22,230 million crowns from 1977 to 1978 to a total of 443,260 million crowns. Total national income in 1978 was 436,740 million crowns at current prices, so that inventories amounted to 101.5 percent of national income. National income in 1977/78 rose 19,900 million crowns, an increase of 4.55 percent, while inventories grew 5.3 percent — that is, at a higher rate than income. By comparison, inventories in West Germany in 1978 were valued at 326,300 million Deutsche marks at current prices, and social product (roughly equivalent to national income in Czechoslovakia) was 975,110 million Deutsche marks. Inventories were thus equivalent to only 33.46 percent of social product. The increase in inventories in 1977/78 was 12,400 million Deutsche marks (a growth of 3.95 percent) while social product rose 79,800 million Deutsche marks — that is, by 7.51 percent.]

The Czechoslovak Central Committee's statement complained about "poor results in reducing production costs, especially in fuel, power, and raw materials." It criticized the standards of management, and blamed the deterioration of "export-import and credit conditions" on "the influence of crisis phenomena in the capitalist states."

On international affairs the Central Committee condemned "the present militaristic policy of the most reactionary forces of international imperialism led by the United States, which threatens to unleash nuclear war on Europe." Its statement went on: "But the forces of socialism, progress, democracy, and peace in Europe and the world at large will stop them and turn them back. Czechoslovakia will help in this struggle to frustrate United States and NATO plans to gain supremacy over the Soviet Union and the socialist countries."

On the subject of Poland the committee had this to say: "In the interests of peace and socialism, the party and the Czechoslovak people express their firm internationalist support for the Polish United Workers' [communist] Party, the Polish working class, and all forces loyal to socialism in the Polish People's Republic in their struggle against counterrevolution."

The State of Czechoslovak Agriculture

In his report to the Central Committee Pitra extolled Czechoslovak agriculture as an "advanced sector of our national economy" that has sustained an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent over the last ten years. Grain production had averaged seven million metric tons a year from 1960 to 1970, a yield of 1.2 tons an acre, and 10.1 million metric tons a year from 1976 to 1980, a yield of 1.7 tons an acre. The good results had been made possible, he said, "only by the help rendered by the Soviet Union," an equivocal comment in the light of Chairman Leonid Brezhnev's recent dreary report on the state of Soviet agriculture. Consumption of meat per

capita, Pitra reported, had risen from 158.7 pounds a year in 1970 to 188.7 pounds in 1980. Consumption of milk and dairy products reached almost 513.7 pounds per head, and eggs an average of 316 per person.

His sanguine report concealed less palatable facts. Grain production in 1980 fell 1.6 million metric tons below the planned target for the year, the third year in a row that it had not come up to par. Under normal conditions Czechoslovakia has to import 1.5 million metric tons of grain, especially feed grains. Only these imports have made possible the increases in consumption of meat, butter, milk and eggs.

Pitra warned collective and state farm managers not to expect any increase in feed grain imports, and recommended a "reduction in the number of hogs because of an unexpected shortage of feed." He urged collective farmers to increase output from private plots and to "look for land unsuited to large-scale socialist production that could be cultivated by interested organizations and private citizens." For this type of farming, once decried as capitalist exploitation, he promised official assistance, including abolition of a special tax on it.

Without being specific, the Central Committee secretary announced that there would be far-reaching changes in planning. He alerted the public to be prepared "for rising production costs in agriculture, which will affect food prices." And in an echo of Brezhnev's recent report on the poor state of Soviet agriculture, Pitra noted: "Not even the communist party or the government can ensure favorable weather."

Fulfillment of the 1981 Economic Plan

Prime Minister Štrougal singled out coal production, the construction industry and agriculture as the weak spots of the 1981 economic plan. He announced that it will be necessary "to reduce electricity consumption by 12 to 13 percent from the 1980 level," a cut that he warned would affect both home heating and transportation. Complementing Pitra's report, he said it would be necessary to increase grain imports by half a million tons, and predicted difficulties in the supplies of meat, fruit, and vegetables. The poor performance of agriculture could also be expected to have an adverse effect on Czechoslovakia's foreign trade.

"Czechoslovakia's indebtedness to both the Eastern bloc and the West is increasing," Štrougal told the Central Committee. Sixty-seven percent of the country's trade turnover is with the socialist states, but "though the government has been trying to balance imports and exports, it has so far failed to do so." As a result, it will be necessary "to reduce imports of certain raw materials and fuel," Štrougal said. The greatest headache, however, was the growing obsolescence of Czechoslovakia's factory machinery and equipment. "Some of our equipment should have been discarded long ago. It is quite unsuited to modern technological systems," the prime minister reported. (Bil'ak in his committee report observed: "Economic depression in the capitalist states is making it hard to secure new foreign credits to offset the shortage of domestic funds.") Štrougal also mentioned "low socialist capital accumulation" as yet another problem facing Prague. The cause

of this, he said, was "the disproportionate tasks allotted to Czechoslovakia as part of the cooperation among Comecon member states. This mainly involves heavy machinery, precision engineering, and the equipment for the nuclear power plants that Czechoslovakia is to build for the entire socialist community."

International Situation

Bilak's report on the international situation concentrated on its economic aspects. His assertion that Czechoslovakia had "overcome more difficult conditions in the past" and his appeal for "mobilization of the party and National Front, improvement of labor discipline, and adjustment of the economy to our present needs" bespoke his pessimistic tone.

He opened by attacking "imperialism, led by the United States, which has made circumstances worse through the strongly worded statements of [President] Reagan and [US Secretary of State Alexander] Haig." He particularly deplored the idea that in "a nuclear war, they would win by sacrificing Europe in the belief that their country would be spared the consequences of a nuclear encounter." He cited three reasons why such a "catastrophe" would not come to pass, however. "The imperialist system," he told the Central Committee, "is not gaining in strength. Its vital strategic positions are threatened and it is losing control over its traditional sources of raw materials. Internally it is suffering from unemployment, inflation, and all the ills of the capitalist system." Another reason why there would be no nuclear catastrophe was "the sharpening of conflicts among the three centers of imperialism" — the United States, Western Europe and Japan. To protect itself, Bilak claimed, "imperialism is turning to a war economy and to disinformation in order to confuse world opinion."

The Central Committee secretary asserted that the West had embarked on a broad frontal offensive against "socialism, the international working class, national liberation movements, and all the progressive forces of the world. . . . Bourgeois propaganda centers and highly placed public figures in the capitalist states are vying with each other to denounce the socialist countries and their system. Reagan's statement that 'communism is a historical mistake that has to be corrected' is well known. . . . American militarists are of the mind that by achieving military supremacy they will be able to dictate to other states. Moscow has stated many times that the Soviet Union is not seeking military superiority, but that it will not allow any disruption of the present balance of power. The Soviet Union has all that is necessary to defend both its own interests and those of its allies. It is an illusion to speculate that the Soviet economy could not stand another round in the arms race."

Bilak conceded that "measures to secure the defense of our community will undoubtedly affect our economy. Our people must be told frankly that no one will offer us peace as a gift. We have to defend peace in cooperation with the Soviet Union, the other countries in the socialist community, and peace-loving forces all over the world. Those who have experienced the horrors of war and can envisage what war would be like today will agree that it is better to live frugally than in prodigality."

Bil'ak on the United States and Western Europe

"American imperialists who would turn Europe into the main theater of a world thermonuclear conflict are willing to sacrifice even their West European allies in the naïve belief that the United States would be spared. President Reagan's words about the possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe were typical. Faced with deserved protests from around the world, he called them an ill-considered utterance. Even the American government termed this example of unbelievable cynicism and ruthlessness merely incidental." Turning to Europe, Bil'ak said that "an important factor in Western Europe's distrust and resentment of American policy is a genuine and justified fear of nuclear war. Realistically minded politicians in those countries are beginning to realize the significance of the deployment of American missiles in Western Europe, to realize that the American decision to produce the neutron bomb reduces their countries to hostages of the nuclear strategists in the Pentagon. [Mass Western European resistance to the placement of American rockets] demonstrates a new shape of unity, a new shape for the struggle for peace. . . . This unity, regardless of its age, political alignment or ideology, [involves] all the countries of Western Europe, as shown by the Copenhagen-Paris peace march and the antiwar demonstrations in Bonn, Paris, London and Stockholm."

Bil'ak paid tribute to the Socialist International. "Even the recent meetings of the Bureau of the Socialist International pleaded for speedy negotiations on medium-range missiles and showed a more realistic attitude toward the United States than most of the Western European governments."

On the Madrid Conference

"The socialist countries are exploring every opportunity offered by the meeting in Madrid [of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] to provide a new impetus for detente. . . . We take it for granted that the interests of Western Europe and of the neutral and nonparticipating states do not and cannot conform with the selfish interests of the American government. The final outcome of the Madrid meeting will depend on how Western Europe will be able to free itself from American pressure and demonstrate the political will to conclude the conference with a positive, realistic and generally acceptable declaration."

On China and the Third World

"The United States seeks to subjugate the African continent, but it will fail to do so because it allies itself with the most reactionary forces there. The recent visit of [President and party Secretary General] Gustáv Husák to Libya, Ethiopia and the People's Democratic Republic of (Southern) Yemen demonstrates our international solidarity with countries that have chosen the road to progress and socialism. The struggle for peace, national liberation, and socialism has been complicated by the plans of American imperialism . . . in complicity with the present leadership of China, which is actively engaged in organizing an international front against the Soviet Union and the other socialist states. . . . This destructive Chinese policy has to be opposed. We must continuously point to the fact that

China has become an ally of world imperialism, particularly American imperialism."

On Poland

"The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will press ahead with its present international approach. In accordance with the resolutions of the Sixteenth Party Congress [in Prague in April], we shall give our full backing to the communists, the working class, and all the courageous defenders of socialism in Poland to ward off reaction's attack and to solve their accumulated problems. . . . We shall determinedly condemn all those forces that try to take advantage of justified criticism and present difficulties in order to make a general attack on socialism in Poland."

All quotations taken from Rudé právo,
October 29 & 30, 1981

THE WRITER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

More than seventy writers from all over the world took part in a congress on "The Writer and Human Rights in Aid of Amnesty International" held in Toronto October 1 through 4 under the sponsorship of the Toronto Arts Group. Among those who took part were Vasily Aksenov, Yehuda Amichai, Margaret Atwood, Joseph Brodsky, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Allen Ginsberg, Natalya Gorbanevskaya, Nadine Gordimer, Yotaro Konaka, Alan Sillitoe, Susan Sontag, Jacobo Timerman, Vassilis Vassilikos, Per Västberg, and William Styron. Czech participants included Jiří Gruša, who now lives in Western Europe, Josef Škvorecký (honorary chairman of the congress), who now lives in Toronto, and Julius Tomín, a philosopher, and his wife Zdena, a writer and translator, who now live in Oxford, England.

Congress discussions revealed wide differences of opinion. Škvorecký doubted in his address whether any revolution, of the right or left, could bring salvation; a Marxist panelist took issue with him. Despite the differences, however, the congress compiled a list of writers in need of international help, among them Václav Havel, the Czech playwright sentenced in October 1979 to four and a half years in prison. His one-act play Protest was performed at the congress. All proceeds from the congress were donated to Amnesty International.

Revolution the Worst Solution

The following excerpts were abridged from Škvorecký's address to the congress:

"I feel frustrated whenever I have to talk about revolution for the benefit of people who have never been through one. They are like a child who does not believe that fire hurts until he burns himself.

"When I was fourteen we were told at school that the only way to a just and happy society led through socialist revolution: capitalism was bad, liberalism a fraud, democracy bunk, and parliamentarism decadent. Our minister of culture and education, Emanuel Moravec, sent his son to fight for socialism with the Hermann Göring SS-Division. He was later hanged, and the minister, to use proper revolutionary language, liquidated himself with a gun.

"When I was twenty-one, we were told at Charles University that the only way to a just and happy society led through socialist revolution: capitalism was bad, liberalism a fraud, democracy bunk, and parliamentarism decadent. Our professor of philosophy, Arnošt Kolman, taught us this. One of the last surviving original Bolsheviks of 1917 and a close friend of Lenin, he died in 1980 in Sweden whither he had fled. Before his death he had returned his party card to Leonid Brezhnev and declared that the Soviet Union had betrayed the socialist revolution.

"In 1981 I am told by various people who suffer from Adlerian and Rankian complexes that the only way to a just and happy society is through socialist revolution: capitalism is bad. . . . Dialectically it makes me suspect that capitalism is probably good, liberalism right, and democracy and parliamentarism a vigorous gentleman in good health, filled with the wisdom of ripe old age.

"There have been quite a few violent revolutions in our century. . . . The final word on all of them comes from the pen of Joseph Conrad, who wrote this in his novel Under Western Eyes in 1911:

'In a real revolution — not a simple dynastic change or a mere reform of institutions — in a real revolution the best characters do not come to the front. A violent revolution falls into the hands of narrow-minded fanatics and of tyrannical hypocrites at first. Afterwards comes the turn of all the pretentious intellectual failures of the time. . . . The scrupulous and the just, the noble, humane, devoted natures, the unselfish and the intelligent may begin a movement — but it passes away from them. They are not the leaders of a revolution. They are its victims: the victims of disgust, of disenchantment — often of remorse.'

"Revolution is cannibalistic. It is estimated that violent communist revolutions in our century have dined on about one hundred million men, women and children. What was gained in this sumptuous feast? Basically two things, both predicted by the so-called classics of Marxism-Leninism: the state that withered away, and the New Socialist Man.

"The state withered away all right — into a kind of Mafia: a perfect police regime. Orwellian thought-crime has become a reality in today's 'real socialism,' as the stepfathers of the Czechoslovak communist party have christened their own status quo. The material standards of living in these postrevolutionary police states are invariably lower, often much lower, than those of the developed Western democracies. . . . But, of course, the New Socialist Man has emerged, as announced.

"Not quite as announced. Who is he? He is an intelligent creature who, sometimes in the interest of bare survival, sometimes merely to maintain his material

living standards, is willing to abnegate the one quality that differentiates him from other animals: his intellectual and moral awareness, his ability to think freely and freely express his thought. This creature has come to resemble the three little monkeys whose statuettes you see in junk shops: one covers its eyes, the other its ears, the third its mouth. The New Socialist Man has thus become a new Trinity of the postrevolutionary age.

"Therefore, with Albert Camus, I suspect that in the final analysis capitalist democracy is to be preferred to regimes created by violent revolutions. I must also agree with Lenin that those who, after the various Gulags, and after the Grand Guignol spectacle of the Polish communist party exhorting the Solidarity Union to shut up, still believe in violent revolutions are, indeed, 'useful idiots'.

"Does all this mean that I reject any violent revolution anywhere, not matter what the circumstances are? . . . It's just that I do not believe in two things. First: I do not think that a violent uprising born out of 'a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object' which 'evinces a design to reduce' men 'under absolute despotism' should be called a revolution. When such a revolution later produces another 'long chain of abuses and usurpations' and people rise against it, in order to be linguistically correct one would have to call such an uprising a 'counterrevolution'. In our society, however, this term has acquired a pejorative meaning it does not deserve.

"And secondly: I do not believe that any violent revolution in which communists or fascists participate can be successful, except in the Conradian sense. Because quite simply, I do not trust authoritarian ideologies and dictatorships, and every revolution with communists' or fascists' participation must eventually of necessity turn into a dictatorship, and, more often than not, into a state nakedly ruled by the police. Neither fascists nor communists can live with democracy because their ultimate goal is precisely the 'absolute despotism' of which Thomas Jefferson spoke. . . . The fascists, I must say, are more honest about it: they say openly — at least the Nazis did — that democracy is nonsense. Lenin was equally frank only in his more mystical moments. . . .

"All this is rather abstract, however, and since individualistic Anglo-Saxons usually demand concrete, individual examples, let me offer you a few.

"In Canada there lives an old professor by the name of Vladimír Krajina. He teaches at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and is an eminent botanist who has received high honors from the Canadian government. But in World War II he was also a most courageous anti-Nazi fighter. He operated a wireless transmitter by which the Czech underground sent vital messages to London. . . . The Gestapo, of course, was after him. For several years he had to move from one hide-out to another. . . . After the war he became a Member of Parliament for the Czech socialist party, but his incumbency lasted for little more than two years. Immediately after the communist coup in 1948, Professor Krajina had to go into hiding again, and eventually fled the country. Why? Because the communists had never forgotten that he had warned the Czech underground against cooperating with the communists. Hundreds of other anti-Nazi fighters were likewise forced to leave the country, and those who would or could not ended up on the gallows, in concen-

tration camps or, if they were lucky, in menial jobs. Among them were also many Czech RAF pilots who had distinguished themselves in the Battle of Britain. . . . All this is a story that has since repeated itself in other Central and East European states, and it is still being repeated to this day in Cuba, in Vietnam, in Angola, and most recently in Nicaragua.

"When Angela Davis was in jail, a Czech socialist politician, Jiří Pelikán, a former communist and now a member of the European Parliament for the Italian socialist party, approached her through an old American communist lady and asked her whether she would sign a protest against the imprisonment of communists in Prague. She agreed to do so but not until she got out of jail because, she said, it might jeopardize her case. When she was released she sent word via her secretary that she would fight for the release of political prisoners anywhere in the world except, of course, in the socialist states. . . .

"So much for concrete examples.

"And just two quotations to conclude. In his Diaries Albert Camus wrote, addressing one of his communist cofighters in the French Resistance: 'Listen, Tor, the real problem is this: no matter what happens I shall always defend you against the rifles of the execution squad. But you will have to say yes to my execution'.

"Evelyn Waugh, whom I confess I prefer to all other modern British writers, said in an interview with George Plimpton: 'An artist must be a reactionary. He has to stand out against the tenor of the age and not go flopping along; he must offer some little opposition'.

"All I have learned about violent revolutions, from books and from personal experience, convinces me that Waugh was right.

"This is my little bit of opposition."

[Škvorecký is a member of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia.]

NEWS FROM NORMALIZED CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A Message to Poland

The preparatory Committee of Free Trade Unions in Prague sent greetings to the first congress of Solidarity in Poland. Its message observed: "Under the present circumstances in Czechoslovakia you will hear mostly criticism, condemnation and hate from our country. Unfortunately, you cannot hear the expressions of sympathy, respect and solidarity that so many Czechs and Slovaks would like to send you." (An announcement of the formation of the committee appeared in Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VI, No. 7/8 [July/August 1981].)

Political Trials

It is difficult to estimate how many political trials have taken place in Czechoslovakia during the past ten years. Only the trials of signers of Charter 77, members of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) and other activists have attracted much attention. Many others have gone unnoticed by the public.

A military tribunal in Plzeň (West Bohemia), for instance, sentenced First Lieutenant Jaroslav Jaroš, MD, on August 19, 1980, to two and a half years in prison "for incorrect opinions about our society, for praising the Western standard of living, and for accusing communist party members of responsibility for shortcomings in the economy." Attempts by his wife, six-year-old daughter, and physician to have him paroled have met with no success. (VONS Communiqué No. 272, November 4, 1981)

Jan Litomiský, a 38-year-old member of the Czechoslovak Evangelical Church, signer of Charter 77 and member of VONS, was sentenced in České Budějovice (South Bohemia) on October 23 to three years in prison for "organizing illicit philosophical and religious seminars in his home."

Three young men from Žirovnice (South Moravia) were convicted in Jindřichův Hradec (South Bohemia) on October 27 on charges of "sedition and vituperation of public figures." Mirek Petruš, 26, was given a 16-month jail term; Jiří Ratay was given 15 months, and Josef Volejník, 10 months. The judges at such trials are usually young, poorly trained jurists who served as members of the security organs during their studies. In this case the judge was Petr Švec, and the prosecutor, one Krajník.

Ivan Kožíšek, a 32-year-old worker from Rumburk (North Bohemia) and Charter 77 signatory, was arrested by the police on August 31 for writing an open letter to President Gustáv Husák pleading for the release of Rudolf Battěk, in jail for more than a year awaiting trial (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VI, No. 7/8 [July/August 1981], p. 3), and for soliciting signatures for it. Seven others who signed the letter were also detained for questioning. The warrant was signed by Police Major Jiří Marek. Police under the command of Lieutenants Kroupa and Štípal also conducted a search of Kožíšek's home at Dlouhá 7, Rumburk.

Religious Persecution

Forty armed men and five women with police dogs on October 27 and 28 raided the house of 90 Dominican nuns (average age 70) in Kadaň (North Bohemia). In ruthless disregard of all the customs of monastic privacy, they confiscated religious literature, typewriters, and two officially licensed duplicating machines. At the same time 120 policemen with four dogs raided a home for 110 elderly priests and the 14 Dominican nuns who kept house for them in Moravec (South Bohemia). Other police detachments searched homes in Bečov, Hošťka, Štětí and Most in North Bohemia. Religious literature was seized, and in one instance money was taken.

Zdena Gálková, a 31-year-old bookbinder in Most, and Radim Hložánek, a 55-year-old priest in Hošťka, were both detained.

Six Roman Catholics were given prison sentences in Olomouc (North Moravia) on September 29. Jan Krumpholec, a 54-year-old worker, was sentenced to three years for "illegally printing and distributing religious literature." Rev. Rudolf Šmahel, 31 years old, was given two years, and a Jesuit, Rev. František Lízna, was given twenty months for alleged "violation of currency regulations" by accepting 5,000 Deutsche marks from a West German friar for repair of a church in Uherský Brod (South Moravia). Josef Adánek and Jan Vlček were each given twenty-month sentences, and Jan Odstrčil, 10 months. All six based their defense on the religious motivation of their activities. (VONS Communiqué No. 273, November 4, 1981; see also Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VI, No. 9 [September 1981], p. 5.)

Letter to President Husák

The wives and members of the families of Eva Kantůrková, Karel Kyncl, Ján Mlynárik, Jan Ruml, Jiřina Šiklová, and Milan Šimečka, all of whom are in detention (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VI, No. 5/6 [May/June 1981], p. 4), sent a joint letter to President Gustáv Husák on November 10 pleading for their release. They cited appeals on behalf of the detained from the European Parliament, President François Mitterand of France, the British government, United States Senator Edward Kennedy, the PEN Club, Amnesty International, the Toronto writers' congress, and other organizations and individuals. They reminded the president that he himself had been the victim of false accusations during the Stalinist era in the fifties when Husák had been sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of nationalist deviation. He was later rehabilitated. Copies of the letter were also forwarded to the Federal Assembly, the Federal Government, and the Prosecutor General.