

# CZECHOSLOVAK NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY THE COUNCIL OF FREE CZECHOSLOVAKIA

420 East 71st Street, New York, N.Y. 10021

Vol. VIII, No. 1 (76)

January 1983

## CONTENTS

The Peace Movement . . . . .	p. 1
New Year's Message . . . . .	p. 2
Socialist Legality and Religious Persecution . . . . .	p. 3
Two New Bishops . . . . .	p. 5
Attacks Against the Vatican . . . . .	p. 5
The West and the Madrid Conference . . . . .	p. 6
The Economic Outlook . . . . .	p. 6
News from Normalized Czechoslovakia . . . . .	p. 7

## THE PEACE MOVEMENT

In its New Year's message the Council of Free Czechoslovakia expressed concern about the danger that the Soviet Union may try to manipulate Western antinuclear movements "for its own imperialist goals," and it welcomed Charter 77's letter which greeted the Western European peace movement "not based on official power political structures," an allusion to controlled "peace movements" in the communist-dominated countries. The Council noted that "peace efforts by way of demonstrations, protests, and other activities merely against military danger are very problematic. There is no genuine, dignified, and peaceful life without basic values which man has the duty to protect."

The Council of Free Czechoslovakia sent the Charter 77 letter to Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, chairman of the Committee on War and Peace of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Chicago; to the World Council of Churches in Geneva; and to Rev. Billy Graham, Montreat, North Carolina.

In its letter to Cardinal Bernardin, the Council expressed "concern that the bishops have not paid enough attention to the underlying causes of the nuclear armaments race, especially to the generation-long Soviet domination of Central and Eastern Europe and the communist suppression of human rights and freedoms."

To the World Council of Churches the Council of Free Czechoslovakia quoted the Charter 77 letter: "We beg you . . . to add to your struggle against the armaments race an intensive effort for the liberation of those who [in the communist-dominated countries] are imprisoned or otherwise persecuted for their stand on

human rights and on peace and cooperation in Europe," continuing a little along this vein.

To Reverend Billy Graham the Council wrote: ". . . We are disturbed by the statements on human rights and religious freedom you made on your visits to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia . . . . They are entirely out of touch with the reality of religious persecution, especially in Czechoslovakia where the people in your entourage experienced the practice of the communist authorities first-hand." (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 11/12, 1982, p. 6, reported on Rev. Graham's visit to Czechoslovakia.)

### A Peace Conference in Prague

A peace conference will take place in Prague from 15 to 19 June, 1983, according to the Prague evening daily Večerní Praha of December 23, 1982. It will host "representatives of the peace movements from the whole world," constituted by some 3,000 delegates and hundreds of journalists. "Hostile propaganda charges that our peace movement is paid by the state," the paper complains, "are not true and we have to refute such accusations." But no refutation is offered.

### NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

The Council of Free Czechoslovakia issued a New Year's message of which we present an abridged version:

We are entering the year 1983 under increasing international tension and fear for peace. Not only people in the communist-dominated countries but everywhere in the world are waiting to see what the new boss in the Kremlin, Yuri Andropov, will do with Brezhnev's legacy of the growing militarization of the Soviet Union.

The 13 years of Brezhnev's regime represented for the Eastern bloc countries a period of economic and social setbacks, cultural lag, and brutal suppression of human and civil rights. Unfortunately, the free world has not always responded forcefully enough to Soviet expansionism and human rights violations. But the Western world is beginning to realize the consequences of Soviet arms buildups and the necessity to strengthen its defenses. The Soviet Union thus started a worldwide campaign against the United States accusing it of preparing a nuclear war, while it strives to infiltrate Western antinuclear movements for its own imperialist goals. We therefore welcome Charter 77's letter to these movements (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 9/10, 1982, p. 8), for not only hydrogen bombs but also human rights must be an integral part of any peace effort.

Czechs and Slovaks became the first victims of the Brezhnev Doctrine. Since the August 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, the country has suffered from progressive Sovietization and, despite its signature on the Helsinki Final Act, the regime has increasingly suppressed all freedoms.

But the struggle for human rights has not stopped. The Czechs and the Slovaks have not given up their claim to freedom, independence, and democracy in spite of the widespread feeling of resignation. Young people find an effective instrument against Marxism in religion. Unofficial seminars and samizdat literature preserve Western values as part of the national tradition.

We call on the Czech and Slovak communists and their collaborators to extricate themselves from the Brezhnev Doctrine shackle. The nation will hold them responsible. The military dictatorship in Poland and a widening cooperation of the military and police establishments in the Soviet Union are proof of the total failure and impossibility to reform the communist system. Its crisis will destabilize the world even more. Our people at home and we abroad face difficult tasks and should fulfill them jointly to renew a humane democracy in our land.

#### SOCIALIST LEGALITY AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Hardly a week passes without new reports from Czechoslovakia about the mounting persecution of religion. Reports are disturbing and create a justified impression in the world that Czechoslovakia has become the greatest violator of religious freedom among the communist-dominated countries, including the Soviet Union. This is not surprising because the regime worries about the growing religiousness of the youth. (In an interview with the correspondent of The New York Times, October 4, 1981, Karel Hruza, head of the Federal Office for Church Affairs, admitted that "in the good old days you would only see grandmothers in churches, but now there are young churchgoers, too.")

To counter its antireligious image, the Prague communist regime has adopted a benevolent attitude in tolerating activities of minor church groups to cover up its brutal treatment of major churches, especially the Catholic Church. Church representatives from the West visiting Czechoslovakia are given slanted information, mainly about the "unrestricted" activity of small church groups. The Constitution is quoted that full religious freedom exists in the country, and Western churchmen are assured that all provisions of the Helsinki Final Act are honored. This strategy was used in 1982 during the visit of the American evangelist Billy Graham (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 11/12, 1982, p. 6) and the chairman of the General Conference of Adventists, W.C. Wilson.

What, then, is the truth? A samizdat report prepared last year inside Czechoslovakia and smuggled out of the country offers an answer (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 11/12, 1982, p. 5). It begins with the comment that the persecution of churches is based on "socialist legality." The basis is the Constitution (of July 11, 1960). In its Article 32 it states that "freedom of worship is guaranteed. Everybody can partake in religious activities provided they do not interfere with the laws." The second sentence is the cornerstone of the regime's antireligious policy.

Article 178 of the Penal Code makes it punishable to "thwart supervision of churches and religious societies." The broadly defined provision serves as a general cover in prosecuting clergy and laymen for activities the government does not approve of. Article 178 is backed by Law No. 218/1949, which deals with economic issues concerning churches and religious societies. Paragraph 7 of its Article 1 provides that "pastoral work and similar activities of churches and religious societies require government approval." In practice this means that no activity is allowed without authorization. To implement the law, offices for religious affairs and religious secretaryships were created. Secretaries are in regions (kraj), counties (okres), and in larger local national committees. Offices for religious affairs are found in the ministries of culture of both the Czech and the Slovak Socialist Republics. A federal office for religious affairs is located in the presidium of the federal government in Prague. Secretaries receive instruction from above, based on executive orders interpreting Law 218, ordinances, and unpublished and confidential instructions,

including some--as revealed during several trials--that mention the secretaries' own discretion."

Through these channels the regime limits religious activities as much as possible. For instance, after the enactment of the above law, approval was required only for clergy. Laymen were free to assist priests. But according to subsequent interpretation, approval was extended to laymen, too. Provisions concerning state authorization were interpreted more and more strictly. At present the police and the courts require authorization for every religious function performed by two or more individuals. Such interpretation covers everything and gives the authorities power to regard as criminal almost anything that "thwarts supervision of churches and religious societies."

The Ministry of Culture of the Czech Socialist Republic issued directive No. 12768/1970 ("Systematic Instructions") and another on June 30, 1975. And the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Socialist Republic issued instruction No. 577/70 of January 28, 1970, according to which specific state authorization applies exclusively to the church where a priest is allowed to officiate. If he wishes to perform religious functions elsewhere or perhaps privately in a home, he needs an additional permit. And it should also be pointed out that according to law the granting of approval is not automatic. Rather, it depends on the discretion of the religious secretary, who is completely independent in his decision-making and is not limited by any legal provision.

Government ordinance No. 219/49 implementing Law No. 218/49 constitutes a further limitation on religious activities. Paragraph 16 of its Article 1 extends the need for obtaining government authorization to any spiritual function, not just activities of churches and religious societies. According to Paragraph 1 of Article 1, clergymen are employed by their church organizations, but pastoral work required by their church can be performed only with the approval and under the supervision of state authorities which pay their salary. It is a modest 800 to 1,500 crowns a month (they received a small raise in 1981; the average factory wage is about 2,500 crowns). If authorization is withdrawn, the priest also loses his salary. Such withdrawal of authorization depends entirely on the local religious secretary who merely notifies the bishop or another competent church official. The decision cannot be appealed. Even if no notification is received by the clergy (say, because it is not delivered by mail), it is in force, and if the priest performs his pastoral duties, he then commits a criminal act subject to prosecution.

A new chapter concerning religious rights began after Czechoslovakia ratified the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. Its text was published in the Collection of Laws under No. 120/1976. A softening of the regime's attitude was expected after its publication which, however, did not occur. The official propaganda immediately explained that the ratification did not constitute any change because, practically, all the rights in the Covenant are already guaranteed by Czechoslovak laws. Article 18 of the Covenant guaranteed "freedom of thought, conscience, and religion . . . . No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom." This means that no state approval should be required by Czechoslovak laws. Clearly, the Covenant and Law No. 218/49 are mutually exclusive. But by ratifying the Covenant the Czechoslovak communist regime pledged "to take necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant" (Paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Covenant). If the Covenant were implemented in Czechoslovakia, Law No. 218/49 and all decrees, ordinances, and instructions, including the confidential ones, should be scrapped or amended, especially the state approval provisions. But the regime insists that the signature of the Covenant is merely a general

consensus regarding religious rights, and argues that state authorization is still necessary because all religious activities are closely linked with economic issues, starting with the appointment of clergy whose salary is borne by the state. The regime therefore regards its antireligious policy as compatible with the Covenant.

- - - - -

Religion is just one example of how "socialist legality" infringes on human and civil rights despite "guarantees" in the Constitution and other laws. All laws in Nazi Germany had to be interpreted under the broadly flexible proviso of "if it does not constitute any harm to the German nation." Socialist legality operates under a similar device. Article 4 of the Czechoslovak Constitution states that "the vanguard in the society and the state is the Communist Party." The party stands above the law and above the government. To paraphrase Nazi legality, socialist legality interprets laws under the proviso of "if it does not constitute any harm to the Communist Party."

#### TWO NEW BISHOPS

The delegate of the Holy See for Czech Catholics abroad, Monsignor Dr. Jaroslav Škarvada, was ordained bishop by Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on January 6. He was named titular bishop of Litomyšl, a town in eastern Bohemia where a bishopric was created in 1344 but which remained vacant since the mid-15th Century. Also ordained the same day was Monsignor Dominik Hrušovský, rector of the Slovak Institute of Cyrill and Methodius in Rome and delegate for Slovak Catholics abroad. Both new bishops were fellow students at the papal Nepomucenum College in Rome.

#### ATTACKS AGAINST THE VATICAN

Attacks by the Prague regime against the Vatican have not ceased. Their focus now is the Vatican's disapproval of the government-supported organization of the Catholic "peace priests," Pacem in Terris (see also Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 11/12, 1982, p. 7).

On December 17, the head of the Federal Office for Religious Affairs, Karel Hruža, accused the Vatican in the party daily Rudé právo that it opposes any work for peace by priests. Pacem in Terris, Hruža wrote, should be credited with the improvement of relations between Prague and the Vatican. "The fact is that even some of the Catholic bishops come from the ranks of the functionaries of the peace movement--Josef Vrána, bishop of Olomouc; Jozef Feranec, bishop of Banská Bystrica; and Ján Pasztor, bishop of Nitra." Hruža even mentioned Cardinal František Tomášek, archbishop of Prague, as a member. (Actually, the cardinal opposes Pacem in Terris--Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 9/10, 1982, p. 1.) In conclusion, Karel Hruža addressed "the clericalist activists in the Nepomucenum and the Institute of Cyrill and Methodius in Rome (Czech and Slovak Catholic institutions)" and the "so-called clandestine church in Czechoslovakia," and wrote that "Czechoslovakia is a country where church-state relations are based on the Constitution and laws."

In line with the policy of Moscow, the Prague government is engaged in a propaganda drive for peace, a state monopoly in the communist bloc.

### Karel Hruza Replaced

On January 5 Rudé právo reported the retirement of Karel Hruza, head of the Federal Office for Religious Affairs. He is succeeded by Vladimír Janko.

### THE WEST AND THE MADRID CONFERENCE

After the opening of the second phase of the Madrid Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the delegations of Denmark and Canada, supported by the rest of the Common Market and NATO countries, tabled 13 new proposals. Even though there is no chance that the East would accept these proposals, the move highlights the difference between the West and the East in the framework of the Helsinki accords. Below are the most important proposals:

1. Removal from the final document of a paragraph that all 35 states express their determination to refrain from the use of force or threat to resort to it. Reason: Soviet use of force in Afghanistan and its threat in Poland make the provision meaningless.
2. All 35 states should express their determination to halt the arms buildup. The Soviet Union is accused of military buildup in the last few years.
3. The right to free trade unions. The communist bloc countries should also be reminded that if they are members of the International Labor Organization (ILO) they have to accept the provisions of the ILO Convention calling for free trade unions.
4. Condemnation of Soviet political interference in Poland.
5. The right of the peoples to criticize their government.
6. The right of the peoples to freedom of religion. This is a restatement of an older proposal in view of the repeated violation of this right by the communist countries.
7. Halting of the jamming of radio broadcasts and commitment to a broader dissemination of information.

The West has also called for two meetings of experts to discuss the deterioration of human rights and human contacts (family reunifications, marriages between couples from different countries, etc.).

The new stage of the Conference begins in Madrid on February 8. Not much is expected, but a possible compromise, especially in the human rights sphere, would be disappointing to the dissident movements in communist countries. For them and their spokesmen in the West it would be more acceptable if there was no mention of human rights in the final resolution rather than a compromise.

### THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The first two years of the Czechoslovak Seventh Five-Year Plan (5YP) failed to meet its targets, even the ones revised downwards. For instance, the 1981 plan envisioned an industrial output increase of 3.4 to 3.7 percent. It was reduced to 2.7 to 3.4 percent and later to 2.3 percent. The actual increase turned out to be 2 percent. The agricultural plan called for a rise in output of 1.5 percent, but

ended with a drop of 3.4 percent. The 1982 targets were therefore more modest. Industrial production was to increase by 0.8 percent, but according to preliminary reports this rise did not exceed 0.4 percent. The agricultural plan's target of 11 million metric tons of grain was not reached, nor were the planned targets for milk, potatoes, leguminous crops, and oilseeds. The 1982 meat plan was fulfilled, but only because more hogs were slaughtered owing to a growing discrepancy between the lagging vegetable and livestock production, a situation that will continue in 1983. Food supplies in 1982 generally deteriorated and food lines at stores were longer.

The outlook for 1983 is not encouraging. Planners face a choice—either to scale down their 1983 targets as in the previous two years or to mobilize all possible means to correct the shortfall. Most probably we can expect that they will tinker with "scientific planning" as before. When Svatopluk Potáček, chairman of the Planning Commission, submitted his 1982 report, he noted that economic development had been burdened with greater domestic and external difficulties than originally envisioned. Speaking of the 1983 budget proposal, the federal Minister of Finance, Leopold Lér, noted that capital investments in 1983 had to be reduced by about 1.5 percent as against 1982 and that the national income would be up by 2 percent in 1983, below the annual targets originally included in the Seventh 5YP. But Rudé právo has already questioned these figures. "To meet the 1983 budget targets will not be easier than in 1982," it wrote, and a few days later it added that "it is necessary to be concerned about energy, fuel, and raw materials consumption and to concentrate on economies in these areas" (Rudé právo, December 16 and 20, 1982).

#### NEWS FROM NORMALIZED CZECHOSLOVAKIA

##### Attempt on the Pope's Life

Rudé právo's correspondent in Washington, Zdeněk Hoření, wrote on January 5 that the investigation of the attempt on the pope's life has become a kind of "hysterical anticommunist propaganda . . . . It is again possible to sell the recent slanderous reports that the terrorists, who assassinated Aldo Moro, underwent training in Karlovy Vary, Smokovec, and Lidice [in Czechoslovakia]" (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. III, No. 5, May 1978, p. 1). He writes that "two unnamed CIA agents contacted the Italian interior minister at a time he did not possess evidence against the Bulgarians" who "were soon arrested thereafter . . . . No doubt that forces which are betting on the liquidation of détente are at work to weaken the influence of the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries . . . . Everything points to various covert and overt American services engaged in psychological warfare."

The New York Times of January 15 published an article by its correspondent Henry Kamm that a Czechoslovak citizen, Petr Bardon, had been arrested at the Czechoslovak-Austrian border crossing. His rented car contained—in addition to a declared consignment of 15,000 rounds of ammunition—300 undeclared handguns and seven semiautomatic rifles of a new Soviet design. An Austrian arms dealer, Horst Grillmeyer, was arrested on January 11. He has been mentioned "in connection with a pistol used in the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II." Grillmeyer's arrest caused considerable attention in Vienna "because of suspicion, at the least, of official Czechoslovak connivance in arms smuggling."

##### Czechoslovak Soldiers in Afghanistan

The New York Times of December 20, 1982, printed a report that two Afghan intelligence officers, who had defected to Pakistan, stated that "armed forces of

Cuba, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the Democratic Republic of Germany are engaged in combat against the people of Afghanistan, besides Russian troops." The Council of Free Czechoslovakia has no independent report on this topic.

### Vietnamese in Czechoslovakia

About 26,000 Vietnamese workers, trainees, and students are in Czechoslovakia. Their presence is not welcome, as evidenced by an article in the youth daily Mladá fronta of December 11, 1982. But it explains that their stay there is "mutually advantageous." People criticize the 900-crown compensation that the workers are "paid during their language instruction" while they are not working [probably in addition to room and board]. Also rejected are complaints that the Vietnamese are the carriers of various tropical diseases. "The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, which recruits people for Czechoslovakia, works under strict criteria to minimize complaints."

### Charter 77 Spokesman Arrested

Ladislav Lis, one of the three spokespersons of Charter 77, was arrested in northern Bohemia on January 5. His home was searched and he was indicted under Article 100 of the Penal Code (sedition). The two other Charter 77 spokespersons, Dr. Radim Palouš and Anna Marvanová, were supposed to be replaced by others but will remain until the situation of Mr. Lis is clarified. During his absence, Lis will be replaced by Jan Kozlík, a technician in a Prague construction enterprise. Kozlík was born in 1946 and began to study at the Comenius Theological Faculty in 1968. He was later expelled for political reasons.

### Dr. Ján Mlynárik Allowed to Leave

Dr. Ján Mlynárik, a Slovak historian and one of the original signers of Charter 77, who was among the last of a group of dissidents released after a long detention without trial (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 5, 1982, p. 1), arrived in West Germany with his wife, 19-year old son, and 13-year old daughter. Exit visas were also promised to the Czech historian Karel Bartošek and journalist Karel Kyncl.

### Economic Briefs

The retail price of gasoline and heating oil was raised from 3.50 to 3.70 crowns a liter (Rudé právo, January 1). Yearly public transit tickets in Prague were replaced by monthly tickets. The cost per year thus increases by 75 percent, from 1,500 to 3,760 crowns (Večerní Praha, December 30, 1982).

According to the German magazine Der Spiegel, the rate of inflation reached 8 percent in Czechoslovakia in 1982. Práce a mzda, No. 10, 1982, wrote that the national income in the Czech Socialist Republic increased by only 0.2 percent and productivity by 0.3 percent while wages rose by 2.3 percent. Officially, no inflation exists in a planned communist economy.

The proportion of qualified workers in "local economy" [craftsmen] and production cooperatives dropped from 76.1 percent in 1949 to 54.4 percent in 1982, while the number of administrative workers increased from 2.8 percent to 15 percent (Planované hospodárstvo, No. 12, 1982).